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The Economic Eden

And Other Sermons

By

FREDERICK F. SHANNON

Minister of Central Church, Chicago, Ill.

*Author of "God's Faith in Man," "The Breath in
the Winds," "The Enchanted Universe,"
"The New Personality," "The Soul's
Atlas," etc.*



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To
Ernest and Belle,
The Best of Brothers
and
Dearest of Sisters

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I

THE ECONOMIC EDEN¹

"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—MATTHEW 6: 33.

BOTH the material and spiritual aspects of this text have been poignantly thrust into the world-consciousness of our age. Ask any nation what is uppermost in its thought and its affairs. Almost spontaneously the answer will be—food, drink, and raiment! Inquire of Russia, or Germany, or France, or England, or America, and without a discordant voice, all of them will affirm that they are thinking most of food, drink, and raiment. Their plaint may have innumerable variations, but the tune is one—food, drink, and raiment. Indeed, in many parts of the world the problem is serious, full of menace, fraught with desperation. All of which reminds us that the dream of an economic Eden is an old one. In some form it has manifested itself in almost every people and every age. If one were asked to formulate that dream in words, perhaps something like the following would be the result: Give mankind abundance of food, drink, and raiment, and all will be well. The theory is utterly false, of course,

¹ Preached in Appleton Chapel, Harvard University, Sunday, May 23, 1920.

but multitudes flourish upon the most specious falsehoods and manage to keep loquaciously fat. But, fortunately, our Lord also has something to say about inaugurating the industrial paradise. Was He not keenly aware of the pressure of this world-old matter? None ever pondered it so deeply! Did He not think an improvement in men's temporal conditions desirable? Unquestionably! Did He not believe it is possible for men to so live together that an ideal state of industrial democracy may be realized here upon the earth? Absolutely! Well, then, what is the Master's solution of this baffling problem? "But," says our All-World Statesman, "seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things"—food, drink, and raiment—"shall be added unto you." Here, then, are the two ways of solving the problem of an economic Eden.

I

Consider, first, the wrong way of realizing the economic Eden. Expressed in brief, it is the desire to make food, drink, and raiment fundamental. Allow these the foremost place in a nation and the nation is doomed. Either a short or long period may be required for the nation to work out its own doom; but it is simply a question of time, because the inflexible laws of the universe are set against such national habits like mountains of flint. Any ship of state strikes those

deep-rooted mountains only to be shivered in pieces. The same is true of the individual. The man or woman who seeks first food, drink, and raiment—who makes these the chief end of being—is at war with the rights of human nature. Therefore, to simplify our study, let us consider why the wrong way is impossible, and, in the large view, unthinkable.

The most obvious reason is this: The wrong way fails to reckon with God. And God will not be ignored. No abstruse argument is necessary to enforce this lesson. Where does your food come from, the daily nourishment whereby you are kept within the bundle of life? Now there is no use interjecting chemical compounds, scientific amalgams, and socialistic palliatives to give a straightforward answer to this question. Nor is it worth while citing, as a final answer, the truism that man troubles the soil, sows the seed, cultivates it, reaps it, gathers it into barns, and, through various processes, converts it into food. Remarkable as all this is, it gets us nowhere concerning the origin of life. Without being hopelessly submerged in a fog of polysyllabic terminology, we may simply say: We get our food from God. For God is life, and life, mark you, is the Master's subject here, as always. He regards things as so many mental tracks leading straight to life. The body must have both food and raiment. But, He asks, "Is not the life more than the food, and the body than

the raiment?" His question is followed by that golden illustration of the birds. "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them." Thus, with a single gesture of vast dimensions and unearthly beauty, does the Master draw an enchanted circle about these pinioned creatures of the air. They are within the tender keeping of the Infinite Fatherhood. Not one can flutter brokenly to the ground without striking a sympathetic thrill through the Eternal Consciousness.

Now all this is either unimaginably true or unspeakably false. Thought has no half-way house in the matter; it must climb the white mountains of reality or flounder in the slough of nonsense. But granting that philosophic, scientific, and chemical formulæ are unequal to the mighty task of comprehending and construing the Master's teaching, we need not therefore conclude that there is no answering and unfathomed reality back of it. Man's stupidity never attains such depths as in those moods and moments when he dogmatically affirms what is possible or impossible in the far fields of being. It is like a raindrop asserting that it is the measure of the sea. Having definite affinity with the billowing leagues of water, still the sparkling drop is infinitely less than the ocean. For those deeps contain lives and powers and mysteries far beyond the measure of the tiny raindrop,

dissolved by a breath of air. Is it not similarly foolish for a human, tapping only a rill from the vast fountains of Inexhaustible Consciousness, to prescribe hard and fast rules governing His creative habits and outgoing sympathies? If we are theists and not mere pantheists, we can say, with Professor James, that God "has so inexhaustible a capacity for love that His call and need is for a literally endless accumulation of created lives. He can never faint or grow weary, as we should, under the increasing supply. His scale is infinite in all things. His sympathy can never know satiety or glut." Consequently, as this same thinker avers, the fact that all the lives and beings beneath, around, and above us may be alien to our range of interests, does not modify, in the slightest degree, the truth that the universe may be athrob "with the most violent thrills of life" for them. In other words, our stoical attitude of ignoring the creatures and humans not immediately dwelling within our own mental and spiritual blocks, merely proves that we are greatly dead, and sinfully unashamed of our corpse-like unresponsiveness. "The universe," continues Professor James, "with every living entity which her resources create, creates at the same time a call for that entity, and an appetite for its continuance,—creates it, if nowhere else, at least within the heart of the entity itself. It is absurd to suppose, simply because our private power of sympathetic

vibration with other lives gives out so soon, that in the heart of infinite being itself there can be such a thing as plethora, or glut, or supersaturation. It is not as if there were a bounded room where the minds in possession had to move up or make place and crowd together to accommodate new occupants. Each new mind brings its own edition of the universe of space along with it, its own room to inhabit; and these spaces never crowd each other,—the space of my imagination, for example, in no way interferes with yours. The amount of possible consciousness seems to be governed by no law analogous to that of the so-called conservation of energy in the material world. When one man wakes up, or one is born, another does not have to go to sleep, or die, in order to keep the consciousness of the universe a constant quantity. Professor Wundt, in fact, in his 'System of Philosophy,' has formulated a law of the universe which he calls the law of the increase of spiritual energy, and which he expressly opposes to the law of conservation of energy in physical things. There seems no formal limit to the positive increase of being in spiritual respects; and since spiritual being, whenever it comes, affirms itself, expands and craves continuance, we may justly and literally say, regardless of the defects of our own private sympathy, that the supply of individual life in the universe can never possibly, however immeasurable it may become, ex-

ceed the demand. The demand for that supply is there the moment the supply itself comes into being, for the beings supplied demand their own continuance.”¹

Now, I have dwelt upon this point because here is the nearest approach we have, in terms of thought, to that profound mental realm in which our Master lived and moved and had His being. Our world, with the uncounted ages which have gone into its making, with the billions of lives which have visited it and vanished away, has no wonder comparable to the God-consciousness of the Lord Christ. What the highest dreamers have visioned of God He felt. Others climb ladders of logic, or ascend in balloons of imagination, to get a foothold in those clear-shining abodes of life wherein He was always graciously and hospitably at home. Consider how sublimely He passes from birds to souls! “And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” Yea, the lily’s dress is woven in the ever-weaving looms of God;

¹ “Human Immortality,” pp. 40-42.

Solomon's glory, at best, is second-hand, artificial, doomed to fade because it belongs to the kingdoms and grandeurs of all fading things. Yet, because God must be reckoned with always and everywhere, each new-coming spring lends a rarer loveliness to these oft-repeated minstrel tones:

“I begin through the grass once again to be bound
to the Lord;

I can see, through a face that has faded, the
face full of rest—

Of the earth, of the mother, my heart with her
heart in accord,

As I lie 'mid the cool green grasses that mantle
her breast.

I begin with the grass once again to be bound to
the Lord.”

The second reason why the economic Eden cannot be realized, through the wrong way, lies in man himself. Man can never come to terms with the mere economic aspects of his being. “But,” you rejoin, “does not history prove that nations and individuals have sought first food, drink, and raiment, rather than the Kingdom of God?” Yes; history proves it beyond all question; and men, in their wild scramble for gain to-day, are likewise proving that side of the case. But, remember, that is only one side of the case—it is not the whole matter. There are unimpeachable reasons for believing that human nature is not done with when it is done with things. Here is a morally self-evident proposition: Because a man

violates the rights of his nature is no proof that those rights are destroyed. What if they are only postponed, to reassert themselves more vigorously than ever, just because they were unjustly slain by their sensualistic taskmasters? "Men betrayed are mighty, and great are the wrongfully dead." But let us draw in the reins of our reasoning; let us forget, for a moment, that any hereafter is involved. Just take the thoroughgoing worldling—the type that makes food, drink, and raiment, or gain, pleasure, and pomp—its sole aim in life. Even in such extreme cases it is perfectly patent, it seems to me, that human nature emphatically protests against its own self-inflicted agony. Does not the gnawing miserliness of the miser cry aloud against him in favour of generosity? Does not the very hollowness of pride and bombast exalt the beauty of humility and unostentatiousness? Does not the flinty hardness of a prayerless face—psychologically overlaid by calloused line upon line like some geologic formation in the natural world—plead for the necessity of the soul's communion with God? Follow out the argument in its widest application—to the glutton, the sensualist, the thief, the anarchist, the murderer, the bolshevist—and invariably crime, sin, wickedness, and wrong become harsh-toned voices asserting the majesty and order of right. Even human nature, in its untuned discords and roaring anarchies, de-

mands that the first things have the first place in thought and conduct and society.

Because this is true, the insanity of the modern world is revealed in the disposition to solve its overwhelming problems on a purely economic basis. Of course the economic phase cannot, must not, and will not be overlooked. Entirely aside from the great moral equities involved, both the godless capitalist and the greedy bolshevist will keep the property values in the front window. But I am not now thinking of the extremists riding on either wing of this old vulture of contention; rather do I have in mind the great average, middle-class assumption that, if we can manage to get abundance of food, drink, and raiment, the long, celestial day will have dawned, the golden age will have come; "these things"—after which both Jews and Gentiles are avariciously seeking, as they uncertainly cling to the slippery sides of this whirling earthly ball in its swift journey through space—"these things" are the Universal Cure-All! Well, if man were just a bundle of flesh and blood, veined with arteries and hung with fats, that panacea might avail. But inasmuch as bones, muscles, and hair do not happen to be the man at all, the moderns will have to look elsewhere than to rich supplies of food, drink, and raiment for the satisfaction of man's nature. What is the weakness of this brilliant book on the Paris Peace Conference? The pa-

thetically academic conceit of the author? The confessedly bad taste in throwing stones of criticism at the greatest group of statesmen in history, hugely pleasing the Hun on the one hand while bestirring afresh the loud-mouthed partisan hatreds in England, France, Italy, and America on the other? No; this is not the glaring weakness of the volume; even history in the making—history made will not be necessary—will take care of all these items, though the work should run through a thousand editions. The weakness of the book is in the stupid assumption that the problems before the Peace Conference could be solved on an economic basis. Yet is not this particular volume just a popular illustration of what the modern brilliantly blind fool has at the back of his mind? “Mr. Keynes does not preach; he has no interest in preaching,” says one reviewer. But to say that this is not a treatise on homiletics or economics is beside the point; the fact is, that in a moral universe such as ours neither homiletics avail anything nor economics; it is imperatively the new creature in Christ Jesus—faith working through love—or else international doom, death, and damnation.

II

Consider the right way of inaugurating the economic Eden. “But seek ye *first*”—not last or even second—“the Kingdom of God and His

righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Ingenious analysis is not necessary to get at the soul of the Master's thought; it unfolds itself as naturally and as beautifully as a flower: Order—Aim—Result. If order is Heaven's first law, moral order is the imperative fact in man's control and use of material values. Of course the vast majority of men do not believe this, but it is indestructibly true. Standing in the very shadow of the blackened and overturned world of to-day, men are still chattering about the inept reconstructive idiocies which have travelled all the long-centuried, midnight journey from Babylon to Berlin. Two books are lying open before me—one two thousand years old, the other just from the press. Both have to do with economics, though the older book is not, specifically, a study of that profound subject. However, when one of the judgment dooms of God are abroad upon the earth, it is careful to contrast the man-made economic order with the God-made moral order. For whatever the much-debated Babylon of the Apocalypse may be, we know that the Babylonian view and method of life was tried by fire, plague, and desolation. All was one fierce, burning fever of commercial rage. The stuff of the wild delirium was gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, linen, purple, silk, scarlet, ivory, wood, brass, iron, marble, wine, oil, flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, *and souls of men!* Now the new book is

called "The Romance of Modern Commerce." It rings the changes on wheat, tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, spices, cotton, silk, wool, shells, precious stones, and metals. "Well, what of it?" you ask. "Can a world such as ours get on without these wares of commerce?" A thousand times no, and God never designed that we should! Oh, hearken unto that majestically-toned Voice from the summit of the New Sinai: "*Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things!*" Therefore, it is Christian politics, high statesmanship, sound business, and individual as well as social self-realization to keep food, drink, and raiment in their rightful order by seeking *first* the Kingdom of God.

But what is our quest—what is it men are urged to seek by our All-World Statesman? It is the Kingdom of God! Nothing less will do, nothing more can be desired. Let us refresh our minds by trying to regasp this paramount doctrine of the Saviour. What has He to say of His Kingdom? Time would fail to rehearse all that He says, but here are a few of the peaks jutting up from the great mountains of His thought. First: The Kingdom of God is unworldly: "My Kingdom is not of this world." That does not imply, of course, that God's Kingdom is unrelated to the men and events in this world. On the contrary, these must be vastly modified, regenerated, and directed by the divine reign of right. Pilate was

incapable of dissociating the idea of a kingdom from some such political and earthly scheme as found embodiment in the Roman Empire. Having asked Jesus if He were a king, Jesus replied that He was the King of Truth, and that seemed to befog more than ever the governor's mental processes. "A king—a king of truth?" one can almost hear him thinking aloud. "Why, a king must have a kingdom, and the kingdom must be like Cæsar's." "No," answers Jesus, "My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My Kingdom not from hence." Evidently, here is something different afoot in the ways of men; there is no provision for sword and gun, for gas and shrapnel; it is the introduction of an unworldly scheme. No wonder the Roman's brows frowningly knit at such words; his thick-skulled, militaristic descendants have been knitting their own brows ever since. Meantime they have gone forth to slay and burn and mutilate and destroy. Then, after the flames of a national or world-conflagration have temporarily burned out, some fool mocks and blasphemes the untimely dead by asserting: "*Christianity has failed!*" In God's name, when has Christianity ever been given a national or social trial? Millions of individuals have tried Christianity and it has proven a glorious success. It is no reflection, surely, upon Chris-

tianity because other millions have refused it, and in that refusal have made a tragic failure of life, however brilliant their worldly success.

The unvarnished truth is that nations corrupt to the core and stenchfully rotten in their political joints and social marrows, have been endurable at all solely because Christian righteousness has found a voice in immortal leaders, sacrificially sustained by the great common peoples of the earth. Alfred the Great, Oliver Cromwell, William the Silent, William Ewart Gladstone, Abraham Lincoln, and Woodrow Wilson—these have their shining places in the centuries because they championed righteousness and challenged iniquity. Be not deceived: God is not mocked, neither can the wise years be bribed; the loud barking of the hounds of slander out on the wolfish track of to-day is but a token of the deathless music that will be blown from golden trumpets by the angels of to-morrow! Crucify, vilify, slay, break, obstruct as you will, on history's third day God's new messiahs of righteousness inevitably rise again from the dead. They have all the long future to work for their cause, while the political Pilates, the industrial Herods, the journalistic scribes, and the clerical pharisees are remembered only in dooms of infamy and woes of shame. For God flings His giants into the human arena and they upset old orders not because they are old, they usher in new orders not because they are new; they valiantly

upset the old and victoriously bring in the new because both old and new must give place to the true!

Unworldly, the Kingdom of God is also non-national. This was a terrible stumbling block to the Jerusalem Jews; many a twentieth century Gentile has likewise stumbled over it to death and destruction. "And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God." The glory of Christ's Kingdom is its planet-wideness as contrasted with national exclusiveness. Many a so-called modern has yet to learn that the Kingdom of God is not French, or English, or German, or American. A man may be a thoroughly volcanic and eruptive patriot, spitting partisan poison from one end of the land to the other, and still be as far from the Kingdom of God as a Hottentot is from the kingdom of civilization. The words of the historian—"A man with a fortune has a hard struggle keeping faith with ideals or democracy"—are a suggestive commentary upon the exclamation of Jesus: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" Why do we have the bolshevistic menace in all lands to-day? You have been fed upon many economic, scientific, socialistic, and political answers; let me suggest one: *It is because nations have repudiated the Golden Rule and invoked the rule of gold!* That is why we have this black,

world-wide, dreadful, organized conspiracy against religion, the state, the home, and the church; it is because men have sought *first* food, drink, and raiment, and sought only second, if at all, the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Civilization has sown the wind, and it is reaping the whirlwind; for whatsoever civilization soweth, *that* shall civilization also reap. We have sown industrial lawlessness and we are reaping industrial lawlessness. We have sown—we are sowing to-day—the seeds of moral disaster and we shall reap a harvest of national judgment. There are but two alternatives—the Golden Rule or bolshevism, the Sermon on the Mount or a Germanized world, the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of chaos. “The solution of the labour problem,” says Mr. Babson, “is wholly a question of religion.” “Above all else,” says Mr. Edmonds, “this country needs a nation-wide revival of old-fashioned prayer-meeting religion.” When a leading statistician and a leading commercial journalist so far forget themselves as to turn preachers—well!—while the preachers of the land should have no fear of losing their jobs, they should devoutly thank God and take courage.

We are indebted to Paul, in whom Christ expandingly lived, for a third viewpoint of the Kingdom of God. “The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost.” It is spiritual, space-

less, timeless, eternal, coextensive with humanity. Wherever man is unselfish; wherever man is just; wherever man is loving; wherever man is brotherly; wherever man prays for himself and others; wherever man toils for the universal good; wherever man yearns for a nobler social order; wherever man lives for the true; wherever man dies for the right; wherever in any nation, time, or clime these moods and dispositions possess the human heart—while they by no means exhaust the full significance of the Kingdom of God—yet do these things compose the soul-stuff out of which new Edens are grown and new Jerusalems are up-built—

“Not throned above the skies,
Nor golden-walled afar,
But where Christ's two's or three's
In His name gathered are,
More bright than gold or gem,
God's own Jerusalem.”

Consider, finally, the result of the true way. “And all these things shall be added unto you.” This is Christ's law of setting personality and property in their true relations. Whence come our wars—commercial, social, military? Do they come from a worthy contest over principle, from a wholesome and useful competition, or do they not largely come from the *aching lust to get ourselves added unto things*? Is not that precisely what multitudes are resolutely and passionately

set upon doing? Most of us are not adding things unto ourselves; we are allowing ourselves to be added unto things. Am I a bigger soul because, perchance, I allow my tongue to be added to the telephone and I suddenly have a tongue hundreds of miles in length; because I add the trip-hammer to my arm and strike a thousandfold mightier blow; because I add the automobile and airplane to my feet and step with amazing swiftness across the earth and through the air? Surely, I ought to be a larger, ampler human because of these splendid bodily extensions, but am I? It all depends upon whether my soul is keeping pace with my body; for this modern man has a body a thousand times larger than the mediæval man. "America is great because of the spirit of her thinkers and not because of the monuments of her manufacturers." We need to remember this, because we are sorely tempted to set our huge modern bodies down upon our little modern souls and crush their soulhood to death, even while we are in the very act of discussing progress, culture, patriotism, high-mindedness, and all the kindred glowing idealisms—realities that mock us because we allow food, drink, and raiment to turn life itself into a materialized mockery!

Oh, I beseech you to consider the Master's way, follow it, and you shall be a masterful, spiritual being. You shall daily and hourly add things unto your own deepening and unfolding personality.

For the Christianized soul colours even property with something of its own value and beauty. Living in the mental, the spiritual, the imaginative, the eternal, we shall compel things to follow in our train even as the innocent moon compels every wandering wave to follow in its golden wake. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Oh, brethren, we are rich, infinitely, overwhelmingly rich—the economic Eden has already dawned through heavens of topaz and ruby—the moment we accept and practice God's immutable law of life in Christ! "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

"We men of earth have here the stuff
Of Paradise—we have enough.
We need no other stones to build
The stairs into the unfulfilled—
No other ivory for the doors—
No other marble for the floors—
No other cedar for the beam
And dome of man's immortal dream.

"Here on the paths of every day—
Here on the common human way
Is all the stuff the gods would take
To build a Heaven, to mould and make
New Edens. Ours the stuff sublime
To build Eternity in Time!"

II

FIREPROOF FAITH

"And who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?"—DANIEL 3: 15.

IT is scarcely necessary to recall the details of this old story in the book of Daniel. It is one of the best known of Old Testament Scriptures. Christian people have known it from childhood. Indeed, there is a subtle danger in this—familiarity may have dulled its wonder and beauty. Are we not constantly tempted to overlook the glory that abides in the familiar, just as we are liable to miss the worth and suggestiveness of that which is close at hand? Sir Joshua Reynolds thought that one of the highest tasks of a man is to keep his friendships in good repair. Not less important, surely, are the duty and privilege of keeping one's inner eyes in good repair also. Then we shall not pass the old and familiar by without receiving its message and inspiration. It is a form of genius to make the commonplace yield uncommon help. Is there no meaning, then, in this story of the three Hebrew children for us? Do we know nothing of a fiery furnace, of the words and acts of a brutal king, of a faith that fire cannot destroy? I think we do. The external setting

may be different, the inner fact abides. It is this we wish to emphasize.

I

Consider the qualities of fireproof faith. An outstanding quality is a noble indifference. "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter." Is it not the speech of souls that have ripped the covering off material things? There is neither bluster nor defiance here—just the calm utterance of brave, upstanding life, conscious that it is beyond the reach of destructive forces. For life that homes in God does not run away because a wicked king swaggers and threatens. Always faith-inspired natures are so busy with essential matters that they have no time to waste on the ravings of a mad ruler. Though he heat his furnace seven times hotter than usual, God's human fire-extinguishers remain amazingly cool. "Feed us to the flames if you will," they declare. "We have no need to answer thee in this matter. Our answer is within and behind and beyond your white-hot fires."

Surely, here is a lesson as deep as life and as old as history. It is this: After doing their duty, men receive strength to leave the issues with God. And it requires an uncommon strength to yield one's cause without bitterness, without despair, but with nourishing, intelligent trust to that God whose plans are long plans, whose ways, if not al-

together past finding out, do not necessarily fit into our own scheme of life and the cosmos. What exponents of this unique strength the three Hebrew children are! Weaklings might have vented their weakness by debating the matter with Nebuchadnezzar. They knew there was no escape from fire or sword. Then why not experience the momentary satisfaction of replying to the king in the king's own mental tone? Just because they were strong—immeasurably strong—in God. An eloquence sublime speaks through their lofty indifference. They were so confident of the victory of right over might; so bent on doing God's will themselves, that they did not pause to counter verbally the monarch's rage. The situation demands deathless deeds; the era of words had vanished.

Now all this is more than ancient history, my friends. Does not each of us have to contend with a wicked king and his fiery furnace in some form? "At last I have you in my power," says environment. "The atmosphere in which you live will gradually poison every high motive; ideals will sicken and die; you yourself are doomed to walk the way of the unburied, a corpse without a funeral; and who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Disease enters unannounced and thunders: "You have gloried in your physical strength, O man; you said, Days and years shall come and go, but I shall go on with accustomed vigour. I have come to prove your

mistake. I will take the colour from your cheek, the spring from your step, the youth from your eye; and who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?" More terrible still, unbelief may syllable its serpent's hiss: "Even if there is a God, you cannot know or understand Him. He is infinite, you are finite; how can the finite comprehend, or even know, the infinite?" Thus the history runs for each of us, for all of us. Backed up against a wall of flame by some fierce, invisible king of circumstance, what reply shall we make? Is there, indeed, an answer at hand? Yes! If, before the crisis, we were in the way of duty and of faith, just as certain as God is God, the answer will flash out swift as light and calm as the galaxies: "We do not need to answer you in this matter, O cruel kings, whatever your tribe or clime. Our feet may be lodged in the muck and mire, but our souls are in the keeping of that God who covereth Himself with light as with a garment. If nature does not betray the heart that loves her, how shall the God of nature betray the souls that love and trust Him? God cannot deny Himself, and He will not deny the children He hath begotten."

 A second quality of faith, that fire cannot touch, is characterized by a living trust. "If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king." An able God and a

willing God—I count that a great creed! But, properly speaking, a creed is not vital until it hurls its forces onto the battle front. These Hebrew heroes were trained in the law of their fathers. Now they are in a strange land, far from home, facing new and untried conditions. How will they behave in this ordeal? What an opportunity to forget the God of their fathers! Yes, and what an opportunity to make the God of Judea real, vivid, victorious on the plains of Babylon! And that is just what they did, but there is only one way of doing it. It is the old way, the new way, the everlasting way—the way of a living trust. The God of yesterday becomes the God of to-day only as we trust Him. If the records of religious history are true, and the experiences of religious men are valid, God can report Himself only to the souls that trust Him. Would we have it otherwise? Not if religion is to be a first-hand, glowing experience instead of a warmed-over, emaciated philosophy. Living faith cannot get beyond the door of its heart without meeting God face to face. Before faith sends forth its yearning call, God is already hurrying to meet the responding soul. Efficient faith takes no account of time or space; it inbreathes God as plants inbreathe air.

Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, let us make much of a God of ability and willingness. At present we are in danger of enthroning an impotent God, if not in the world and the universe.

at least in our own limited thinking and proverbial impatience. Because men are in sore straits does not absolutely imply that God is in sore straits also. It may be that God is hunting for men's souls, that God is causing men to hunt their own souls, in this planet-wide, fiery furnace into which we have been thrown. At any rate, let us not be unduly upset by Mr. H. G. Wells' views of God. Others have declared God to be a kind of broken-down Samson, bound down in the universe by sundry withes named law or fate or force, striving to find himself and struggling to manage things. But God has survived countless novelists, scientists, theologians, and preachers. Paul's God in Christ was able to do exceeding abundantly above all that he asked or thought. If God does not change with the worlds and centuries, then He is the very same to-day. This is not a time, my friends, to give over the true and living God for gods that are no gods at all. If the planet is going up in fire and smoke, then I want to be on the side of the God of Christ and Paul, rather than the paper God of some popular and passing theoretical adventurer, though he run into the hundredth edition. It is vastly more consoling to believe that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth than to guess that universal impotence would like to reign but cannot. Our God is not only able, but willing, to help those who come to Him in faith. "Then why does He not will that wars cease, that wickedness be ex-

elled from the world, that wrong and injustice be overthrown?" To thoughtful people, to those who hold, with Tennyson, that we dare not give up the mighty hopes that make us men, the answer is perfectly obvious: Men are not willing that sinful things should be destroyed out of the earth. For such an end the help of every rational human being is necessary. It is not enough that few or many should desire God's will done on earth as in heaven; all must desire it, all must will it before it can be universally effective. Of course, there is the old, easy way of making God into an infinite kaiser, who forces every one to obedience, whether the subject wills it or not. But this policy of blood and iron would not only unmoralize God, it would dehumanize man as well. Until man loves righteousness and hates iniquity, there is, and can be, no complete and completing moral deed in his soul. Would not the heaven of saints prove an excruciating hell to all wicked, thrust-thither people? If the gods of fable be the shining moments of great men, as one said, then the God of Christian reality is not a momentary splendour, but a perpetual sun to lives willing to dwell in God's great bosom, safe and deep.

A further quality of faith that fire cannot singe is a divine scorn of the second best. "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." As if they had said:

"We are perfectly sure of our God, O king; it is this that renders us nobly indifferent to thy power; but if not, if we are mistaken and God fails us, then we will take our stand upon the bed-rock of pure soul—we will have none of your gods, and we will not worship your golden image!" That, in its daring simplicity, is sublime. It cuts clean through flesh and blood, and bone, to naked spirit. It splits our subconsciousness wide open and says: "Look in, gaze deep, and if you fail to find God, you are either stone-blind or else there is no God." When life puts on tones like those, be assured that God is doing the talking. He may be speaking through lips of clay, but it is none the less the eternally divine that has seized a human tongue. "Men do not believe in immortality because they have ever proven it," said James Martineau, "but they are always trying to prove it, because they cannot help believing it." It is even so of great human life and daring in the presence of the Infinite. They compel us to believe in God, not because we can prove Him like a geometrical theorem, but because, in the light of their majesty and deeds, we cannot help believing God. That is why I love the words of that Irishman at Andersonville prison. He and his ghostly companions had been brought out into the sunlight. They were told that the Union cause was already lost, and that if they would swear allegiance to the Confederacy, it would be well with

them. Just then an Irishman asked the privilege of speaking. He looked so hungry, thin, and death-like, that it was deemed perfectly safe for him to speak. Mounting an old box, he did speak, and this is what he said: "Attention, squad! Right flank, forward, march! Back to death!" Do you think that a fiery furnace, roaring with its sevenfold heat, can destroy that spirit? I say to you that fire will only temper and tune it, until it utters the wildest and grandest music. By terrible things, God is answering men in righteousness, and in these terrible days do righteous men flame with the glory and terror of God. "Let us go through," said William of Potsdam, to Belgium. "Otherwise I will cast you into the burning, fiery furnace of militarism." The Belgian reply, says Gilbert Parker, will ring in the aisles of time until there is no more time at all: "Belgium has always remained faithful to her international obligations; she has fulfilled her duties in a spirit of loyal impartiality; she has left nothing undone in order to maintain or to secure respect of her neutrality. The attack upon her independence, with which the German government threatens Belgium, would constitute a flagrant violation of international law. No strategic interest justifies the violation of that law. If the Belgian government accepted the proposals, which are put forward in the German note, it would sacrifice the honour of the nation, and would, at the same time,

betray its trust toward Europe." Militarism may slaughter the martyr nation's body, but, in so doing, it only arouses Belgium's soul to scale new heights of honour and of sacrifice. "It is not what happens to you in life that matters," says Lloyd George. "It is the way in which you face it." Then Belgium's face must be forever beautiful, because, when her scourging came, Belgium's soul mounted to her face, looked out and irradiated the encompassing horror.

II

Conclusion
Let us now consider some results of this indomitable faith. We scarcely need to remind ourselves that Nebuchadnezzar was made furious by the speech and attitude of these faith-men. Nothing enrages brute force like an appeal to the highest. "Is it of purpose," asks the king, "that ye serve not my god, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?" In other words, it is inconceivable that there should be a purpose different from, or contrary to, my own. What slight changes kaiserism has undergone in twenty-five centuries! . . .

Consider, therefore, that the faith of the three inevitably draws the form of the Fourth. "Lo," said the king, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods." It is a dictum of science that every body in the uni-

verse attracts every other body with a force which varies inversely as the square of the distance. It is a dictum of Christianity that where faith is, there God is. As light proves the sun, faith proves God; for as the sun produces the very light that proves it, so God inspires the very faith that proves Him. Set it down as one of the certainties which alter not—that where true faith is, there God is, because God cannot and will not resist true faith. The dungeon cannot shut Him out; space and distance are His couriers; wind and wave fulfill His word; death and hades yield Him their secrets. “Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.” We may be unquestionably sure of God alone—that is life’s deepest lesson. In the come and go of things, in the vast changes and upheavals of a universe in the making, God only changes not. He is the one clear, luminous point of refuge and relief amid ruined systems and decaying dynasties. True, we may not always determine the form of His coming. He may come in thunder, or music, or pain, or death, or love.

Or he may come in unutterable quiet—noiseless as perfume rising from a flower, silent as sunlight falling upon a blade of grass, tranquil as summer's green passing into autumn's deepening gold—yet with a sweet, subduing, tremendous energy that lifts the soul beyond the clutch of circumstance, beyond the fires of agony, beyond the palsied reach of death, into the morning glow of His own blessed countenance.

“God of the granite and the rose,
Soul of the sparrow and the bee,
The mighty tide of being flows
Through countless channels, Lord, from Thee.
It springs to life in grass and flowers,
Through every grade of being runs,
While from creation's utmost towers,
Its glory shines in stars and suns.”

Moreover, though the three may be bound when cast into the furnace, the Fourth cuts their bonds, and four men are loose. “Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire.” High and holy freedom may be found in the fire—that is neither faith nor hope, but fact, experience, reality, revealed in the finest human nature our world knows. When the executioners were about to fasten his hands to the stakes by spikes, Polycarp asked that they might be bound only. “He, who gives me strength to bear the flames,” he said, “will also give me strength to remain unmoved on the pyre.” Freedom in the fire! I have a friend in heaven who said to me: “As I was going on the

operating table, I said, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.'" Liberty in the fire, bonds burned away, a soul making flames a pavement under its feet! I have a friend in Brooklyn, who, when financial disaster swept their home like a besom of destruction, wrote me these words in the midst of the fire: "One thing our loss has done for me is to bring me nearer to my Saviour, and I have prayed as I never prayed before." Glory and majesty and triumph in the fire! "How are you this morning?" I asked an old friend. "Very well, thank you," he replied, "since God knocked me down, and I stopped trying to manage the universe." Wisdom loose, walking in the midst of the fire! John Addington Symonds wrote: "Had it not been for Dante's exile, the world might have lost its first and greatest epic. Beatrice might have missed her promised apotheosis." Poetry singing out of the midst of the fire! Great souls, one and all, declare that it is worth being thrown into the fiery furnace just to meet the form of the Fourth, and with Him walk the flames in freedom and triumph.

Finally, this incombustible faith renders its possessor impervious to harm. "They have no hurt." Now let us not be foolish and unchristian by denying pain, disease, sin, and death; yet let us not forget that we and our beloved are in the care of a God who has set a limit to the destructive power of physical things. It is a commonplace, for in-

stance, that fire does not destroy, but simply changes the form of matter. Were the world itself burned up, there would still remain the same quantity of matter as before the world's transformation by fire. What I wish to urge, then, is this: Lives, hid with Christ in God, cannot be really harmed. Certainly their bodies may be bruised and broken; but they—the Christ-begotten, praying, trusting, serving immortals—cannot be touched by external powers. Justyn Martyr gave our truth a memorable verbal setting. Condemned for being a Christian, he answered: “You can kill us; you cannot harm us.” And our Lord said: “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into Gehenna; yea, I say unto you, fear Him.” That is, fear God, not the devil. Christian people have no right to fear the devil; they have the Christ-given right to fight him, to defy him, to resist him—the victorious right of godly fear. Then do men, like flame within the naked hand, bear souls unhurt of fire or flood, disease or death, gas or shrapnel. Therefore, that Frenchman's story, to Mr. Frank H. Simonds, makes brave reading.

“I had two boys,” he said. “One was taken from me years ago in an accident; he was killed, and it was terrible. But the other I gave. He was shot, my last boy, up near Verdun, in the beginning of the war. He did not die at once, and

I went to him. For twenty days I sat beside him in a cellar, waiting for him to die. I bought the last coffin in the village, that he might be buried in it, and kept it under my bed. We talked many times before he died, and he told me all he knew of the fight, of the men about him, and how they fell. My name is finished, but I say to you now, that in all that experience, there was nothing that was not beautiful."

Ah, yes, a son wounded to death, twenty days in a cellar, a coffin under the bed, and a family name perishing from the earth! And what of it all? So much more than words can say that words are well-nigh profane. Enough that in all that experience there was nothing that was not beautiful! Fire, at the worst, can only burn a Christian out into God's deathless morning! That great preacher and true poet, Doctor Gunsaulus, has uttered the principle in rhythm and rhyme:

"I care not that sharp thorns grow thick below
And wound my hands and scar my anxious feet;
I only care to know God's roses grow,
And I may somewhere find their odour sweet.

I care not if they be not white, but red—
Red as the blood-drops from a wounded heart;
I only care to ease my aching head
With faith that somewhere God hath done His
part.

I care not if, in years of such despair,
I reach in vain and seize no purpose vast;
I only care that I sometime, somewhere,
May find a meaning shining at the last."

III

CHRIST'S MAN

"But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."—ROMANS 8:9.

PAUL has a fashion of penetrating into the very soul of reality. The text is a striking illustration of his method. He is considering the stamp of a genuine as contrasted with a spurious Christian. Laying aside conventionalities, he declares, in a swift lightning-stroke of thought, what constitutes the ultimate in discipleship. It is this: The Christian is a person possessing, and possessed by, the Spirit of Christ. Everything else is beside the mark. The issue is clear-cut. There is no haze, no half-lights, no soft-tinted suppositions. It is simply the difference between the quick and the dead, fact and fiction, make-believe and reality. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Here is the death-blow to mere professionalism, a kind of judgment-day's doom for clever excuses and popular trimming. Moreover, it is a challenge to our own time, which seems in a strait between the Emersonian and Father Taylor types of mind. The philosopher and the Methodist

preacher were very dear friends, but lived in different sections of the spiritual universe. "Emerson," wrote Taylor, "is one of the sweetest creatures God ever made; there is a screw loose somewhere in the machinery, yet I cannot tell where it is, for I never heard it jar. He must go to heaven when he dies, for if he went to hell the devil would not know what to do with him. But he knows no more of the religion of the New Testament than Balaam's ass did of the principles of the Hebrew grammar."

Now this is not just a discriminating and humorous statement. It is far more than that; it enables us to catch two souls in their attitude toward finalities. Intimate as they were, friends and lovers, able to respect and appreciate each other's individuality, yet the religion of the New Testament and Christ mark the line of separation for Emerson and Taylor. And, my friends, make no mistake—this is the line of separation for all of us. It is just a pointblank choice between the lower and the higher, the secondary and the essential, the good and the best. Here, then, is the gist of our present study—whether we have any right to accept the inferior ways of life and faith when the more excellent and superior are demanding a verdict.

I

By way of approach, we may say that the lesser meanings of Christianity partake of the imper-

sonal. Dropping the negative in the text, it reads: "If any man have the spirit of Christ"—that is, spirit is spelled with a small "s." It implies that the Christian is one under the influence of a man named Jesus, who lived and died in Palestine two thousand years ago. He was a good man—the best earth ever saw; He was a great man—the greatest among the sons of men. But He is dead and gone; the stars keep watch above His Syrian grave; He is a lovely memory, precious, but just a page in the sealed book of the past. This, I think, is an adequate statement of the impersonal phase of Christianity. Analyzed, this viewpoint breaks up into the following subdivisions:

First: Jesus is an atmosphere. The metaphor is excellent. Atmosphere is essential to physical well-being. A room is shut off from the outer world. Darkness, disease, and death hold carnival within. Why? For lack of atmosphere. Fling wide the doors, open the windows, and atmosphere, sweet, keen, health-bringing, comes smiting in with gently powerful pressure. So this idea of atmosphere as descriptive of Jesus on man and society is fine, but—impersonal. It marks the difference between the antique east and the modern west, between such religions and cults as Hinduism and Eddyism and New Testament and historic Christianity, to say nothing of the finer philosophies of the race.

Second: Jesus is an example. This is better

still. Example, we know, is one of the immeasurable factors in our human world. The example of the parent, the friend, the scholar, the statesman, the preacher is so vast, so subtle, that we have no accurate method of reckoning it. Thus certain men emphasize the example of Jesus. He befriended the outcast; He remembered the forgotten; He sought out the lost, as a shepherd seeks the one strayed lamb; He loved children and took them in His arms; He toiled with His hands; He entered into the joys of a wedding feast; He was august in His simplicity; He was majestic in His humility; He was compelling in His self-assertion; He was quietly masterful and sometimes He was irresistibly indignant in the presence of injustice and unrighteousness. Yes; Jesus was a truly great and wonderful example. "Why not take Him as such?" asks the disciple of the inadequate view. Why? Just because example falls pathetically short of that full-toned vitality which bursts from the personal, with which the impersonal cannot be on intimate, friendly terms. Jesus, as an example, merely, confronts us with the alternative of choosing the good, the second-rate, when it is our duty and privilege to choose the best and the supreme.

Third: Jesus as a teacher. From the atmospheric to the exemplary the transition may not be marked, but it is important. It helps to distinguish some of the finer shades and tones in Chris-

tian thought. Thus Jesus the teacher occupies a separate brain compartment. Why not, says the lesser standpoint, close with Jesus the teacher and settle the matter? He is the first schoolmaster of the race. Think of His morality, His views of God and man, His wealth of democracy, His international inclusiveness! Socrates was Greek, Cicero was Roman, Voltaire was French, Shakespeare was English, Kant was German, Emerson was American, but Jesus—well, He was opulently universal. His planet-wideness could not be obscured by His Palestinian garb and Aramaic speech. Why not, therefore, accept Him as our foremost teacher and have done with mental hair-splittings? Just because the facts drive us to something beyond—infinately beyond—the teacher, however transcendent. For the general soul of man offers no deeper homage to the Christ than this: *He Himself is so interwoven with His teaching that the truth and the person cannot be separated.* This is phenomenal in the history of mankind. Of what other figure does the soul make such rigid demands? It is enough for Plato to be identified with truth; we accept his truth and let Plato go; but truth and Jesus—they are one and indissoluble, now and forevermore. Who cares whether Socrates sometimes lost his temper and said harsh things to Xantippe? We rather think, perhaps, that it was the philosopher's duty to "talk back." But we grant no such license to Jesus: we demand

perfection of Him. The Christian consciousness is a hard master—so austere just, so whitely true that it will have only One for Master and Lord, and One alone! He must be without blemish, terrible with moral splendour, free from fleck or taint.

Here, surely, is something unique in the history of thought and character: Truth is able to walk alone, unattended save by its own moral grandeur, except in the solitary instance of Jesus. Poetry could even dispense with Shakespeare and survive; song would be draped in mourning the rest of its years, but its heart-break would not be utterly incurable. Philosophy could drop the name of Immanuel Kant, tremendously significant as that name is, without permanent dislocation. Art would survive if Rembrandt's colours were taken from its canvases. Science would be sorely handicapped without the work of Darwin; but the loss of that imperial name from scientific categories and processes would not cause chaos in the physical universe. Except in the single case of Jesus Christ, truth is so absolute that its agent may be dispensed with; so impersonal that undue intrusion of the personal element is bad form. But truth and Jesus are so enmeshed and rooted in each other that if a flaw is found in His person, the rafters of the Temple of Truth itself would come crashing down. Humanity could not survive the wound wrought by a false Christ; the moral uni-

verse would be wrecked by the shock of a meretricious Jesus. Let Solomon be a rake, and David play the fool, and Peter act the traitor, and John lose his temper; but Jesus—let no dark stain mar the snow of His being, lest life itself become an idiot's tale and earth be found to rest upon painted fog-banks! Is not this demand which we make of our Saviour one of the mightiest tributes the soul could offer its Redeemer?

Moreover, this lower or second-rate interpretation of Christ not only partakes of the impersonal, but it is marked by a differentiating character-strain through the Christian centuries. For example, it has fostered the delusion that the Kingdom of God belongs to the intellectuals. It insists that a man must *think* his way into and through the spiritual kingdoms. Now it is the duty, of course, of every Christian to be a thinker; but if a man is just a thinker, operating an intellectual mental trap for the delight of seeing it open and shut, he is not only very far from the Kingdom of God, but he is so far that, until he changes his method of spiritual travel, he has no hope whatever of reaching even the outer confines of the Abode of the Blessed. Many spend so much time changing their intellectual clothes in preparation for the Christian feast that they are always just too late for the feast itself. Too often they come to the end of life mental incompetents as well as spiritual paupers. It is a solemn task to keep on

speaking terms with mind and thought; but let us remember that the laws of mind require us to play fair; we cannot go intellectually hopping, skipping, and jumping through our years without discovering, in the end of the day, that we have largely dissipated whatever thinking powers we may have had.

Besides the intellectualist the lesser viewpoint produces, also, a passionless type of discipleship. Well-pleased with life, it is distantly enraptured by the progress of mankind in general and of itself in particular. Unaware that there are agonies and heavens and hells in the universe and in the human heart, it jauntily acquiesces in the hope that "somehow things will come out all right." Thus putting nothing worth while into the world, it naturally draws nothing out. Such living declares no Christian dividends because it earns none. The fire of missionary activity never flames upon its hearth. To it, the dire disasters of sin are as nothing compared with the shallow reformations wrought to-day and forgotten to-morrow or the day after. Gliding smoothly along the broad highways of the non-essential, it is most timid in undertaking those great spiritual steepes gashed by Calvary, indented by the Tomb, and garlanded by Resurrection lilies. It has a positive genius for tracing great events and truths to secondary causes, when the First Cause is so reasonable that any but the spiritually blind are compelled to rec-

ognize it. And all the while this passionless, splendidly dead genus of discipleship is congratulating itself upon its modernity, pathetically unconscious that it is just the twentieth century dupe of those outworn gnosticisms which flourished in Egypt, India, and Greece thousands of years ago. Having borrowed some present-day intellectual togger, many of these vendors of the antique and exploded are selling their wares at bargain-counter prices and incidentally doing a land-office business. It is all beautifully inane, magnificently humbuggish, and Christlessly tragical.

II

If the lesser meanings attached to Christianity emphasize the impersonal, Christ's man emphatically asserts the personal. "If any man hath the Spirit of Christ," suppose we read it thus, "he is one of His." The small letter, the emasculated and undistinguishable, is flung into the background; that which ought to be capitalized, which is agelessly unique, swiftly occupies the front lines to wage a Christian warfare. After all, it is not the professional Christian who counts, much less the neutral dabbler in spiritual shallows. Rather is it the man possessed—the man reborn, renewed, risen—who knows he was greatly dead and who likewise knows that he is throbbingly alive in Christ Jesus—he is the man who wears well in this world and will thrive in any world to which

his soul-business calls him. Consequently, this larger meaning of Christianity, like the smaller, manifests itself in certain splendid details.

First: Christ's man is he into whose personality the Christ is inwrought. Here we come upon a realm so mysterious and occult that it refuses to yield up its secret to clumsy philosophic and psychologic tools. Certainly we must try to apprehend and understand it; that is our duty as well as an essential part of our spiritual unfolding. Many, however, become so hypnotized by the process that they are undazzled by the reality. Now it is the fact we are considering, and the vibrant, transfiguring fact is in my text. What is it? Just this: That Christ Jesus, in the person of the Holy Spirit, seizes the human personality and indwells it. This fact alone constitutes a Christian. The theology of it is another and different matter; the philosophy of it is just an effort to put decent mental clothing upon naked thought; the psychology of it is compellingly interesting but unquestionably secondary. Multitudes know the reality and are ignorant of its philosophy; multitudes, also, are experts in the philosophy and strangers to the reality. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." He may be Buddha's, or Zoroaster's, or Plato's, but he is not managed by the Final, he is not in companionship with the Ultimate, he is not possessed by the Supreme.

Now this is either truth or nonsense. And nonsense is at a premium in our time; why should truth be thrust out into the cold—a beggar whom we refuse soul-lodging? As a sample of the kind of thinking that evokes applause, take this statement of Sir Oliver Lodge in his New York lecture: "Character persists after death. If we have no character, then our individual life merely goes back to the general stream of life like the vegetable and animal." Assuredly, character persists after death; but what a nice, easy method Sir Oliver has for getting rid of personality! If we have character, supposedly good, we survive after death; otherwise, we are merged into the general stream of vegetable and animal life. That is to say, an atom outlasts a soul. "Whip an atom from one end of the universe to the other," the brilliant Thomas Starr King was wont to say, "and it will remain an atom still." But, argues Sir Oliver, if we fail to achieve good character, we blandly discharge our moral obligations to God and man by subtly absconding out of the personal into the animal and vegetable kingdoms. What an inviting Mexico such realms would be to every wilfully moral insolvent and practiced scamp in the spiritual universe! Would he not escape thither with mocking joy, glad to leave his creditors and the hounds of justice in the lurch? Like much muddy thinking in our day, this kind forgets to distinguish between *character* and *person-*

ality. Personality cannot be gotten rid of; it may be good or bad; it may be clothed in a Joseph's-coat-of-many-colours, but personality is on our hands, on God's hands, forevermore. The worlds may be folded up like a garment, but personality is so alive with the stuff of Godhead that it cannot be tucked away in some cozy corner, doomed to timeless inertia. Having laboured personality into being, at the command of God, the universe cannot modify its work, nor undo what has been done by Infinite Wisdom and Love.

At this juncture, also, Christ's man asks a question of the psychological researchers, spiritualistic mediums, and disciples of the ouija board. The question, in view of the stress which is placed upon the relatively unimportant, is fundamental: Why do so few of their cult make any effort to communicate with Christ? Beyond all question, if anybody has survived the grave, if anybody offers indisputable evidence of persistence in the unseen kingdoms, it is He. Thus, if humanity is on the verge of establishing some new method of communication with the world of spirits, is it not strange that more is not made of the One Person Who is readily accessible, Who challenges mankind to verify His claims, Who is eager to be communicated with? Until this is done, some of us will be compelled to keep our spiritual heads, pay tribute to reason, and practice the old but ever new method of climbing to the feet of God over the

rungs of the unfallen ladder of Christian prayer, repentance, worship, forgiveness, faith, hope, and love. "Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me," says the Christ. Have you had authentic tidings from God? Have you learned the unlearned? Very well! What is the evidence of your mastership in eternal matters? That you rock a table? That you spend your days in trying to talk with some one who, in Time or Eternity, is very much of a human like yourself? Not at all! If you are expert in the high things of God, this is your unassailable credential—that you come to the King of Glory, Who opens the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Otherwise, you may succeed in getting yourself everlastingly classified in somewhat suspicious company. "He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep," says the Good Shepherd of the Immortal Sheepfolds, "but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

Second: Christ's man is the playground of authentic spiritual power. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." The perplexed disciples were insistent upon minor propositions—times and seasons; our Lord held the major matters in the foreground—enriched personality and its secret. These are the essential facts for all men and for all time. How, in the best sense, to enrich personality, is the task of

every human. We may push the subject into the background, giving it small chance in our tumultuous days, but some time we are as certain to be convinced of its absoluteness as we are God-imagined men and women. Personality is all we finally retain; it is our wealth or woe; all the vanishings from us, all the clings to us—these are meaningful only as they make the person rich or poor. Having laid the world away, we shall see ourselves as we are. The trappings of circumstance, the veneered excuses, the conventional apologies—all the current coin which rattles so loudly in our markets of hypocrisy, has no purchasing power whatsoever in the emporiums of reality. Therefore, power—power personalized—power that is the essence and quintessence of the highest and finest in the universe—power inbreathed and generated by the Holy Spirit—this is the true mark of Christ's man, who is not the victim of what William Watson calls "world-strangeness," but is at home in any world, because His Lord is Master and King of all worlds.

"Then," you say, "if this is so important, tell us how to obtain it, or receive it, or possess it." That is a noble request indeed—one that any servant of the Lord should be eager to comply with. I think I can tell you how to become an instrument of the Holy Spirit, how you may realize and illustrate in your own person what Professor Peabody has defined Christianity to be—"a form of

power." The initial step has to do with sin—repenting of your sin, changing your mind, forsaking the thing you know to be wrong, unhallowed, unworthy. You will find this a big job—much more than you contracted for, if you are in earnest. You will be forced to your knees—you will know wrestlings, agonies, misgivings. You may wet your pillow with your tears as you cry out in the night: "God be merciful to me a sinner." If your case is genuine, you will not think much of your possessions or your position, your culture or your crudeness, your youth or your age. You will feel the truth of that assertion of Professor James about the deliverance of all religions—that there is something wrong with you, and your wrongness is made right by connecting with the Higher Powers. Or, again, you may not be the subject of religious violence. You may be born from above as quietly as the new day rises upon the world, as noiselessly as summer's green steals across the pasture-lands, as softly as the dews of night kiss the faces of sleeping flowers. But beware! The still-born child is forever still. Striking the true Christian vein, we know that, in general, Christ's man came somewhat violently rather than quietly into the Kingdom of God. Of this much be perfectly sure: He either knows *when* he was born from above, or else he knows that he is *alive now*. Life is splendid evidence that birth has taken place. Power—power in the will, power in

the mind, power in the imagination—"ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you"; but—"if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." "Christianity," said Tennyson, "with its divine morality, but without the central figure of Christ, the Son of Man, would become cold." In verification of the truth of the poet's statement, many a professed disciple's spiritual temperature has dropped several degrees below zero. And all because he tried to make Christianity just one more of the world-philosophies, instead of enjoying its life-giving vitalities, of experiencing the thrill of its power-inspiring energies.

Third: Christ's man is clothed with an unworldly peace. One of the supreme moments of history, surely, was that in which the Master promised His peace to the disciples. Calamity had shocked them to the centres of their being; their world seemed to topple down in ruins and chaos; they were like frightened folk of the woodlands pursued by destroying hounds. But hark! The chimes of unearthly peace begin to peal forth in that troubled hour. Peter's fear vanished; John's perplexity took wings; James was lifted out of his practicalities into tranquillizing idealities. "Peace I leave with you"—a testament which will outlast Cæsar's dominions; "My peace I give unto you"—the inmost Soul of the Universe shall gently enfold you in His protecting care; "not as the world

giveth, give I unto you"—the world gives gorgeous illusions, I bequeath spiritual substance. Therefore, "let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." For Christ's man knows that His peace is not a dead, lifeless calm, an unruffled emptiness, but something fiery and glowing, a creative serenity which refuses to be disturbed by all the tumults of earth and time. It enables one to perceive, with George Fox, that there is "an ocean of darkness and death; but withal, an infinite ocean of light and love which flows over that of darkness." A man said to me, as we were looking out over the park near his home: "It is lovely here in summer. Sometimes I can hardly go to business for watching the children play. As many as fifty nurses, with their happy-hearted little ones, may be seen down there in the grass and under the trees on fine mornings." It was the dead of winter when he spoke. Snow was on the ground; the trees wore no "nests of robins in their hair"; the music of childhood's laughter could not be heard.

But my friend's words and face instantly suggested two aspects of peace. First, there was the quick, riotous, innocent peace of children at play. It was an intervital peace—a peace wrought of summer mornings, of singing birds, of perfumed gardens, of green trees. Lovely, it was external; enchanting, it was a matter of environment; sweetly innocent, it was unrelated to character.

The man's face told a different story. It was the playground of many a storm arched by spiritual rainbows; many a temptation had left its imprint there, as well as many a victory; he had companioned sorrow and joy, failure and triumph, doubt and faith—a gallant, masterful human who had fought and won the good fight, serenely westward bound. Such, I take it, is the tribute God commands the years to pay lofty human character. For Christ's peace at last stations the soul upon the skull of the brute; grants spiritual equilibrium in a universe of terrific motion and mystery; abstracts deepest joy from bitterest sorrow; turns apparent death into a jubilate of life. Therefore, if any man hath the Spirit of Christ, he is one of His—one of His redeemed, one of His deathless, one of His music-makers, one of His hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that have been purchased out of the earth. Christ's man is the final incense the universe gives back to God.

IV

THE FINAL EDUCATION¹

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—II PETER 3: 18.

THIS text has a great setting, whether we view it from the standpoint of vision or of thought. Laying its hand upon the whole physical frame of things, its inward reach penetrates to the Eternal Mind and Heart. Two of the great philosophic schemes are here—uniformism and catastrophism. One reads an orderly, evolutionary unfolding of the universe; the other discerns the changes and forward-movements incident to sudden upheavals of cosmic energy. It may be a kind of mental shock to mention the names of Huxley and Peter in the same breath. Nevertheless, Huxley, a thoroughgoing evolutionist, says: "For millions of years our globe has taken the upward road, yet, some time, the summit will be reached and the downward route will be commenced." "But," says Peter, "according to His promise, we look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." And J. Arthur Thomson exactly expresses the apostle's underlying thought in his

¹ Delivered before the Presbyterian Ministers' Association, New York, April 7, 1919.

memorable words: "The indestructible matter and energy will doubtless pass into a different expression, but a particular thought will have completed itself."

Thus, it would be interesting to dwell upon these doctrines of uniformism and catastrophism, not only in their relation to modern thought, but in their relation to New Testament thought also. However, my present purpose is more immediate and practical. For every older and younger generation, as you are aware, has mutual obligations to each other. Age tends to conservatism, while youth is progressive. Too often the hoary head thinks the skull of youth is sure to get cracked, just as youth gaily asserts that age is hopelessly fossilized, and the sooner its wisdom perishes the better it will be for mankind. Both attitudes are unwholesome, unjust, disproportionate, and ungodly. Age should remember that this is God's world and youth is God's opportunity of getting His truth a new and deeper foothold in the human consciousness. Youth should consider that truth unfolds itself very slowly, that it has required many generations to receive and nourish virtues and principles which are priceless. Where is the secret of a creative and constructive medium to be found? My text contains it. I like to think of it as holding the formula of Life's Final Education: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

I

“But grow!” Apply it as we may, here is an exhortation that challenges us to consider one of the supreme facts of the universe. Growth is the key to the house of being. Is it not a many-roomed house? There are doors upon doors, rooms upon rooms, with infinite halls and confusing corridors. Yet, if you hold the key of growth in your hand, and know how to apply it to all the bewildering locks, you will go far through this house of wonder. To begin with, growth is the clue to the physical world. The astronomer gives his first chapter the title, “The Birth of the Earth.” How did the seeds of life first get into the furrows of our world? An old question, it is of perennial interest. Wise men claim that the original life-germs were brought hither by meteors or aerolites. But however and whenever they came, those microscopic entities were astir with the genius of growth. Stars grow, rocks grow, crystals grow—not even the inorganic realm can escape the law. Our earth represents a tremendous growth, from the moment of its birth in the cradle of immensity on to the epoch when its present form shall have been changed into moulds of matter of which we are entirely ignorant. Hurrying on to the world of intelligence, a thousand voices are commanding: “Beware lest ye fall back into the pit of animalism, lest ye be devoured in the jungles of wickedness, lest ye fall from your

own God-called steadfastness. But grow—and grow—and keep on growing!”

What a singular fact is this to which the late Dr. William Hanna Thomson calls attention. Of the two cerebral hemispheres of the human brain, the mind uses only one. Moreover, if you are left-handed, you think through the right hemisphere, while, if you are right-handed, you think through the left hemisphere. Just why this is so—*well, now, just why is it so?* What we do know, however, is this: The brain, the house of the mind, wondrously grows. “It is simply,” says the anatomist, “the anterior termination of the spinal cord.” *Simply?* Why not say “simply simple” and be done with it! The growth of the brain—that whitish house of soft matter which God leases to us for an uncertain tenure—is so marvellous that, in pondering it, the futility of words is pathetic. Again: Why does every species of organism, passing from cell-life into highly complex forms, resemble one of its parents? Here is a universal fact, says Alfred Russel Wallace, that does not excite even wonder or curiosity among most people. “Yet,” he adds, “it is to this day, absolutely inexplicable.” Furthermore, if we are going to visit the profound realms of moral being, we must get into the chariot of growth. “The earth beareth fruit of herself,” says the Master; “first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.” We accept this as pure fact, but we

strangely overlook the preceding thought which called it forth: "*So is the kingdom of God.*"

Surveying the law of growth in general, we find that it completes itself in its social bearings. "The universe is a system of social forces," says William Wynne Peyton, "a living majesty of society." There are no isolated physical forces; they are all in definite relation, from atom to star, from star to heliotrope's fragrance. "The life on our globe is the work of physical, chemical, psychological, psychical forces of many kinds, working in correspondence, sternly opposed, finely balanced, delicately adjusted." Now, if this is true of the physical, how are peoples to remain separated as in former world-schemes? Why, you might as well try to separate the breath of spring from the throat of a bird. Wickedness infernal is stalking the earth to-day; chaos is boiling up from the blackest depths; the devil has momentarily discarded kaiserism and disguised himself in bolshevism, a sinister aspect of the human brute. But neither brute nor devil can triumph, because the Lord God omnipotent reigns. What if this world-tumult should prove, under the guidance of God, to be a blind, groping, even a horribly wicked, struggle of the peoples to get together? America, my friends, is in no danger of losing her national identity, if she sets her face toward the right; she can manage the menace, black as it is, of bolshevistic internationalism, if she will nerve her soul

unto Christian righteousness; but if she refuses to do this, neither her noble dead nor her patriotic living can save America, or any other land, from ultimate doom. We must nationally grow in righteousness, justice, and truth, or nationally perish. It is just the irrevocable fiat of God, the powers of self-destruction organized in the structure of the worlds, the good or evil of a humanity that must either accept Christ's way or destroy itself.

II

Seizing the suggestiveness of Peter's counsel to grow, I have barely skirted a realm of thought which is boundless in its dimensions. It were picayunish to debate whether the apostle understood the large implications of his fertile word; that may be safely left in the hands of all dexterous hair-splitters. The fact is, he has not only set a spacious mental gate ajar, but invited us to walk in and inspect spiritual landscapes that are unique, magnificent, and inwardly satisfying. "But grow!" Yes, he says it distinctly, resonantly; but he says much more than that; he says you must grow after a certain type, according to a specific pattern: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." So, if you count life, with Browning, "just so much stuff to try the soul's strength on, educe the man," you will find a vast deal of that heavenly stuff

locked up in these two words, Grace and Knowledge, and their peculiar setting here. I think they are enchanting, refreshing, enriching.

Grace, as you know, is a beautiful, old pagan word. In classical Greek it meant the giving of joy or delight, hence charm, winsomeness, elegance, favour. There were three graces in Greek mythology. They were called Euphrosyne, joy; Thalia, bloom; and Aglaia, brilliance. Sprung from Zeus and Hera, they lived with the Muses on Mount Olympus. Perhaps the word charis, from which comes our word grace, originally signified external beauty mainly, tangible loveliness. But Christ has transfigured the word, deepened it into unfathomable depths, shot it through and through with the splendour of God's Heart. Therefore, in its Christian value, grace signifies: The love of the Eternal released in His passionate energy of redemption through Christ, making it impossible for God or man to be satisfied with mere beauty of form, driving the soul back upon the ultimate source of beauty—God Himself.

It is evident, therefore, to grow in the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, means that the soul has found the road which leads finally to the absolute beauty. Beauty without and beauty within—the life hid with Christ in God knows the accessible homes of beauty, dwells in them, and is inspired by them, even as it hurries on to possess larger mansions of loveliness. Clearly, the prac-

tical bearing of this truth upon the final education of a human being is inescapable. What a corrective it is to all the polite hypocrisies that curse our modern world! How it shames the chameleon character that thrives on hearsay! How it rebukes the compromises men are constantly making in the interests of popularity! How it drags into light skeletons grinning in the closets of religious tricksters, showing that while the original skin of the exposed skeletons was thin enough, the present supply is incapable of covering the ghastly bones! How it smites down, with wholesome iconoclasm, the thousand and one false idols set up in the name of God but in reality blinding us to the simplicity which is in Christ!

One day I was talking with a tree-doctor in New Jersey. While the men were pruning the trees and applying tree-tar to the wounded, bleeding parts, this arborist said that some trees would grow if planted upside down. "That tree," he said, pointing to one close by, "would flourish if the roots were put up in the air and the branches down in the soil." Somewhat incredulous, I tried to match his statement by reminding him of the scientist who says that "nineteen-twentieths of a tree's life comes out of the atmosphere."

Both may be right, and both may be wrong, for aught I know. What flashed through my mind while he was talking was this: Multitudes of men and women seem to have been planted upside

down! Their feet are kicking at the skies of reality while their heads, and all they contain, are thrust deep into the muck. Worse still, they are soullessly content with their attitude, their position in the scale of being. Nor am I thinking altogether now of those vice-driven creatures whose violation of the moral law renders them physically repulsive. For sin does not confine itself to the wearing of loathsome clothes; it may be most fatal when least obvious. The cloud of scorn may darken a classic brow; the poison of hatred may spurt from an eloquent tongue; the demon of unchastity may dwell in a bosom adorned with sparkling gems.

Oh, yes! Sin bedecks itself in gorgeous raiment; it readily adopts philosophic cuts, scientific poses, artistic shapes. What is the most beautiful, graceful creature in the animal kingdom? Dr. Scully thinks it is the South African green water-snake. Gliding sinuously through clear, still water, he affirms that it is probably unequalled for beauty in the entire brute creation. "The liquid medium," he says, "enhances its gloss, until it resembles a living emerald. Its rhythmic curves weave patterns graceful almost beyond the possibilities of imagination." Yet, no matter how rich their attire, how incomparably beautiful their olive, green, pink, and velvet black; no matter how rhythmic their motion as they coil and swim, leaving, as Coleridge sang, every track a flash of

golden fire—they are still slimy, wriggling, creeping, repulsive snakes, some deadly, all loathsome. Nor is it otherwise when sin puts on dazzling raiment. It may wear the grace of Venus even while it conceals the very deadliness of death. The sting of death is sin; the strength of sin is the law; and the law exacts its pound of flesh in time and in eternity.

But to grow in the grace of Christ! That is the supreme beauty, because it is inner, moral, and spiritual. "If I had but two loaves of bread," runs a phrase in the Koran, "I would sell one and buy hyacinths, for they would feed my soul." The grace of Christ is richer far than the food of angels or hyacinths; it is God's answer to the Psalmist's prayer: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." It is God's handsome fulfillment of the ageless promise: "In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth." It is the spiritual realization of Swedenborg's golden mysticism: "In Heaven the oldest angels are the youngest, for they are continually marching toward the springtime of their youth." To grow in grace, then, is to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"; it is God's method of keeping our souls from growing gray and wrinkled; it is the divine secret of opening wells of inner vitality that rise to all eternity; it is the beauty that abides after the fashion of the world is frayed and faded. "The habits of the

mind form the soul," said Balzac, "and the soul gives expression to the face." Naturally, faces vary in their expression, as well as in the quality they express. Facial tones and tints are as diversified as sky-tones and sky-tints. Yet, if Christ dwells deep within the soul, the face, that visible map of our invisible world, usually confirms the truth. "Whom not having seen ye love"—Christ somehow inhabits the invisible sanctuaries of being. He looks through the eye, He feels through the touch, He listens through the ear, He speaks through the voice. Hidden behind all outer horizons, the Lord Christ suffuses human nature with a glory excelling twilight skies enkindled by flames from altars of the Infinite Beauty.

"He came and took me by the hand
Up to a red-rose tree:
He kept His meaning to Himself,
But gave a rose to me.

"I did not ask Him to lay bare
The mystery to me:
Enough the rose was sweet to smell,
And His own Face to see."

Is it not the grace of our Master that endows homely people with exquisite loveliness? Look at Paul, in bodily presence weak, in speech contemptible, a diminutive hook-nosed Jew, a human wart on the face of creation. But when that Damascus light burned into him, when that brightness brighter than the noonday sun pierced the sub-

stance of his being, Paul was henceforth inflamed by unearthly lustres, a human peak quivering with the dawn of Immortal Mornings. "We all," he says, "with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." Looking long into the Face of God through Christ, Paul's homeliness was gradually merged into the Everlasting Fairness.

Look at Abraham Lincoln, long, gaunt, ungainly. Nature nominated him for the office of physical coarseness, but in due season he became God's candidate for distinguished character, elected unto gentleness, courtesy, refinement. It is this, and this alone, which explains that mother's tribute. Her boy had been sentenced to be shot for falling asleep at his post. Championed by Thaddeus Stevens, the mother sought and obtained an audience with the President. After looking into the case, Lincoln pardoned the lad and sped a messenger with the news to the boy's regiment. Going up to Stevens, the mother said, between her sobs: "You told me Mr. Lincoln was ugly. How could you say so, Mr. Stevens, for I think he has one of the most beautiful faces I ever saw." Hearing of the mother's tribute, Lincoln "laughed his sweet, soft laugh, as merry as a boy, but there were tears in his eyes." And what, I wonder, were those tears but the joy of God in the grace and beauty of one of His illustrious sons?

Some years ago I was rushing through a blinding rainstorm to a neighbouring church. I caught, amidst the downpour, the perfume of flowers borne upon the night winds. I think the memory of that fragrance will evermore keep me grateful for the storm. You know it is easy to forget the breath of flowers carried on the gentle wings of the west wind, but when it comes riding by in the chariot of the storm, both the tempest and the fragrance are treasured in the temple of memory. Abraham Lincoln was a human storm wafting the redolence of celestial gardens across the world. He was so inwardly beautiful that we thank God for his outer homeliness, lest we love and venerate him more than a mere mortal deserves. And to the last hour of his life, he grew in the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Here, also, is a second great word: "Grow in knowledge!" Suppose we stop there, and what is the result? Europe in ruins is the result; a world transformed into a cemetery is the result; homes, schools, cathedrals, factories pounded into dust—that is the result; wounded bodies, shattered nerves, broken hearts by the million—that is the result. One day as the Master left the temple, an enthusiastic disciple pointed to that splendid pile and exclaimed: "Teacher, behold what manner of stones and what manner of buildings!" But the Teacher, acquainted with the ways of Eternity and unbribed by the gauds of Time, made answer in

the thundertones of fate: "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down." Now, think your way back to August, 1914; then let that red month be the point of departure for a still further backward view. Did not the builders of the modern world point to their stupendous pile and say: "Behold, the great Temple of Modern Civilization! We ourselves, heirs of the ages and modern men, have builded it! Our own hands got us all this wealth of learning and material grandeur!" But that Eye—that old Eternal Eye that neither slumbers nor goes blind; and that Voice—that honest, faithful Voice that speaks in terms of doom—ah, that Eye and Voice were relentlessly seeing and saying: "*Seest thou this great building? There shall not be left here one stone upon another!*" Yet the world was too blind to see, too deaf to hear. Architecture is no substitute for the knowledge of God in Christ. Both an epoch and a man may be expert in many kinds of knowledge; but if they are destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, they are, in the wider area of things, only mental jackstraws, effigies to be consumed in the fierce heats of unquenchable reality. True, knowledge is power; but thought is more than knowledge, and life is more than thought; for life is the breath of God in the souls of His children. But if they have not that breath divine, they are the hiding-place of the

cyclones of destruction and the tempests of death. Fiercer than evening wolves, degenerately godless men have as much of the milk of loving-kindness as a male tiger.

Wherefore, to grow in knowledge is not enough. History demonstrates it and individuals prove it. To turn the human brain into a cash register which, every time you press the button, registers the cash of material facts only, is to possess a monster while you operate an engine of deviltry; it is to do business with a jeering, scornful Mephistopheles, who sneeringly short-changes you in matters of destiny. God has never yet made a man big enough to grow in knowledge only and permanently thrive.

Look at the two Bacons—Roger and Francis. Grand old Roger Bacon lived more than three-fourths of the thirteenth century—one of the longest, most fertile furrows in the field of time. His was one of the generative, conceiving minds of history. His children of intellect may be likened in number to Abraham's children of faith—innumerable as sands and stars. He undertook to comprehend learning within three domains: Memory, which retains the facts and movements of History; Imagination, which flowers forth in Poetry; Philosophy, which is the coronation of Reason. The Admirable Doctor's intellectual scheme, which I have but dimly hinted, was amazing. More than two and a half centuries later,

another Bacon is knocking at the mysterious world-doors. And it is well that the Destinies admitted him; for the trunk of his soul was packed and jammed with essential goods for men. Strangely enough, both Bacons were the sworn foes of Aristotle. They held that the intellectual shadow cast by the majestic old Greek had already rested too long and too darkly upon the human mind. So, with the advent of Francis Bacon, deduction gave way to induction. He taught us that you cannot make a syllogism and require Nature to verify it. Theoretically, your major and minor premises, together with the conclusion, may *seem* irrefutable. But Life, like Hamlet, knows not *seems*; it reckons only with *is*.

Thus Bacon insisted: First get your facts; then you may make a true syllogism. Yet neither of these gigantic men, exploring in all realms of the ascertainable, crunched the crusts of knowledge alone; they were nourished on the Bread of Life. Lord Bacon was like a huge galleon, loaded with precious stones and sunk in oceans of iniquity. But at last Heaven's wrecking-crew raises the splendid vessel and sets it full sail toward the Ports of Christian Redemption. "First," he says in the dying whispers of Time soon to be lost in the tuneful silences of Eternity: "First, I bequeath my soul and body into the hands of God by the blessed oblation of my Saviour; the one at the time of my dissolution, the other at the time

of my resurrection." It is true that he speaks, in the same paragraph, of leaving his name and memory "to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages"; but not "*First!*" A soul in the presence of the Holy God has a strange power of setting things in their true relation. Then do fame, name, and memory recede into the background; but "*First!*"—ah, it is the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Evidently, the apostle is not emphasizing mere knowledge. Evidently, also, the souls of men do not emphasize knowledge only in the crises of life. Neither hearsay nor information nor superficial guesses nor false convictions are adequate. Then do we require the knowledge *of* Christ, which is a very different thing from knowledge *about* Christ. We may mentally bulge with as much information about the Master as the brilliant Renan himself and still be none of His. Knowledge of Him is won by mental sweat not only; it is knowledge received by a willing will. It is the knowledge supreme, eternal, supernatural; it is the knowledge that guides through those awful realms which lay between the Infinite Brain and the Eternal Heart. None can sustain the soul in those high altitudes but the Lord of Glory. For sin binds the soul upon a wheel of fire. Unforgiven, tears of remorse must scald it like molten lead.

Therefore, not the least of the benefits of the

Divine forgiveness in Christ is this: The heart is melted in streams of penitence rather than congealed into a shape of ice—a frozen, lifeless thing wrought, as Burns said, by “the hazard o’ concealing.” Certainly, many a man may wish that, when his brains are out, he is dead and done for. But the wish is only father to the blistering desire; it cannot alter the fact. Stars may and do burn out, but Man is doomed to burn on in glory or shame. “Why,” asks Hamlet, as he handles Yorick’s skull by the graveside, “may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?” Why, on the contrary, may not imagination, fired by faith, trace a Christlike soul, till we find it clothed in the white of Eternal Life? To-day we are turning one of the great bends of history. We cannot see what lies around the corner. Philosophy, according to one of its own disciples, “is aware that the Absolute is escaping her grasp, and that in making every effort to define it she is running the risk of clasping only a shadow.” Then what a new, glorious, golden day for the preaching of Christ! O philosophers, preachers, scientists, sinners,—every one and all—what therefore ye worship in ignorance, this declare we unto you: Life’s Final Education is to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

V

GOD'S LONG PURPOSE FOR HUMANITY ¹

"For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren: and whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

—ROMANS 8: 29, 30.

AS certain star clusters neighbour each other in space, so the First Chapter of Genesis, the First Chapter of St. John's Gospel, and the Eighth Chapter of Romans neighbour each other in the spacious firmament of Scripture. Taken together, they express God's long purpose for humanity. For if we are to have religion at all, purpose must lie behind it and pulse through it; if we are to have a Christianized humanity, there must also be vast reaches of time—cycles, generations, epochs. These two, then—intelligence, plan, goal, on the one hand, and terms, times, ages, on the other—are suggested by our

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three famous chapters, as they are absolutely essential to God's immense enterprise for humankind in His universe. Therefore, the question: What have we in these Scriptural thought-movements? First, creation; second, incarnation; third, salvation—with its stupendous details set forth with splendid variation in the text. The thought-stuff herein surely brings with it a commanding challenge; and, through the genius of Paul, the thought has put on verbal clothing of the finest quality. And is not Paul's style amazing? Broadly speaking, there are two styles in English—the colloquial style of Addison and the Latinistic style of Dr. Johnson. Neither is supremely effective alone. By blending the two, however, the best qualities of each are realized.

In brief, the simplicity and straightforwardness of the Addisonian style must be duly wedded to the majestic roll of the Johnsonian manner. Thus do we get the whip-crack sentence. It is short, sharp, snappy. Thus, also, do we get the cumulative sentence, with its rising power, its sublime momentum, ending in the billowing boom of the stately, rounded period. The amazing feature in Paul's style is that, even in translation, the two characteristics are unconsciously and beautifully blended. I must not tarry to give examples—for the matter in hand is of greater moment than that of style. Aldrich said, after feeding upon Emily Dickinson's poetry, that in the presence of such

original thoughts, the subject of grammar was a kind of impertinence. Style may be even so here. Nevertheless, my text, declaring "God's Long Purpose for Humanity," may be cited as an excellent illustration of Paul's marvellous literary clothing: "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren: and whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

I

Consider, first, God's purpose in the realm of thought. Paul's mind is a kind of spiritual microscope through which we may discern the operations of God's mind. "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren."

Here, then, are two phases of the Divine Mind before there was either universe or man. They are expressed in the terms foreknowledge and foreordination. Granting that these are words and ideas which have been grievously abused, we must still insist that they are among the sublimest thoughts in the history of revelation. Therefore, an iron-clad predestinarianism must not be allowed to rob them of their richness and stimulus. What

do we mean by the Divine foreknowledge? Expressed in the simplest manner, we mean that God possesses knowledge beforehand, prescience, foresight. "It is God's being aware in His own plan," says Meyer, "by means of which, before the subjects are destined by Him to salvation, He knows whom He has to destine thereto." In other words, God's foreknowledge signifies that God has thought things through—that there is plan, purpose, and goal for the universe, and all within it. Here is a seed. Goethe was among the first to see that the seed contains, in embryonic form, the complete tree. There is a definite relation between the seed and the tree, because they have been thought through, from recondite germ to golden fruit. The Infinite Thinker knew what He was about in creating the seed; thus foreknowledge precedes bud, blossom, and fruit.

On the human plane, this line of thought is almost tritely familiar. For example, we are assembled in this house of worship. We know that this great building was once an idea in the mind of the architect; that the idea took shape on his blue-prints; that the drawings were finally clothed in these walls and floors of wood and stone. This church edifice is the result of the architect's foreknowledge. Why, then, should we doubt the foreknowledge of the Architect of the Universe? There are some aspects of the doctrine of total depravity which I cannot accept; but the man who

says that the world is an accident, without Creator or Fatherhood, without aim or end, is explicable only on the theory of total depravity—he is a kind of Vondel's Lucifer in terms of flesh and blood; he is more eager to believe a falsehood than to embrace the truth. Stripped of its theological and metaphysical bearings, if it is at all possible to strip anything whatever of such relationships, God's foreknowledge is one of the most foodful of Christian tenets. Worlds, angels, and men are all foreknowingly brought into being. The whole vital, quivering scheme has been thought through by the Omniscient Thinker. On the human plane, foreknowledge is just practical common sense, manifesting itself in manifold ways; on the Divine plane, foreknowledge is Infinite Wisdom, manifesting itself in Creation, Incarnation, and Salvation.

Foreordination is the second thought rendered spiritually visible by the apostolic microscope. "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained"—here we abruptly stop, taking up the age-long debate on election, foreordination, and kindred subjects. "He also foreordained"—we usually strike a sort of mental dead centre there; it is our point of departure for dark mountains of theology and rainless wildernesses of philosophy. We turn to the Westminster Confession of Faith and read: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated

unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." It is hardly necessary to say harsh things about this particular exposition of foreordination; we emphatically do not believe it; nor do we believe that the misguided souls who wrote it believe it now—they have learned to think more Christlike thoughts of the God Whom they so ingloriously misrepresented. One of the sure proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion is the vigorous way in which it has survived the misinterpretations of some of its sincere defenders.

Let us frankly admit, therefore, that foreordination, as formerly construed in mediæval creeds, is anything but creditable to God or man. On the other hand, this great doctrine, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, is full of stimulating, quickening reality. Consequently, let us read the passage to the end, refusing to be trapped by interposing theological or metaphysical dead centres: "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." Now why did God determine in eternity, before the universe of matter was created, to beget a race of human beings on this planet? Here is the answer—clear, adequate, unutterably sublime: That they

might "*be conformed to the image of His Son.*" This is abundant justification, surely, for the creation of man, with all the risks, defeats, and failures that flesh is heir to; and to ascribe to God any motive than that of immeasurable wisdom and love, in peopling the earth with human beings, is a species of blasphemy, born of sin, ignorance, and perverted thinking.

"*To be conformed to the image of His Son!*" The foreordaining motive is so high, so holy, so shot through with Heavenly Love, that it were impossible to conceive a loftier reason for the beginning and completion of man's career on the earth. "The main enterprise of the world for splendour, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man." The universe is a school in which to train souls after the likeness and example of Jesus Christ. Than for this the stars can have no grander end in describing their orbits, nor suns in rising and setting, nor winds in blowing, nor rains in falling, nor seasons in their faithful returns. For this—that human beings might *be conformed to the image of His Son*—love is worth its agony, and birth its pain, and faith its doubt, and failure its heartache, and death its hallowed mystery. All difficulties, all anguish, all suffering, all labours, all disappointments—all are worth while in a world whose God-given intention is to produce men and women after the fashion of the Son of Man.

Moreover, as Drummond has reminded us, here

is a kind of life which has been quite overlooked by science. When Paul speaks of men and women being conformed to the life of Christ, he is referring to a law well known and universally operative in the vegetable and animal realms. It is the law of conformity to type. Take this little seed and hide it in the ground. What occurs? In due time, that mysterious life-splendour at the centre of its being will flash forth in triumphant and variegated release. The flower-life will build up a flower after its own image. If faith hears the lark within the songless egg, as Tennyson thought, the lark obeys the same law as the flower seed. There is a lark-life long before there is either egg or song; and this lark-life creates a melody-haunted lark after its own image. Trace the law of conformity to type in all its manifold ranges, and you will find that it is undeviating as well as wonder-smiting.

Why, then, are we so backward in emphasizing a similar law in our Christian revelation? Is it not rather strange that we should be more keen on rock-life and tree-life and bird-life than we are on Christ-life? For that, too, in harmony with the vast movements of image-making life throughout the lower orders of the universe, works patiently and perfectly on toward the realization of its pre-ordained end. The Christ-life, foreknown and foreordained before constellations were sent spinning along their cosmic paths or electrons were

set dancing within their microscopic galaxies, creates the soul after its own image and likeness. And no law in physics, from Democritus to Lord Kelvin, has received nobler or more accurate formulation than this holy law of the Christ-life as set forth by Paul: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even from the Lord the Spirit." Browning has given this New Testament concept of foreordaining Love memorable setting in his "Saul." After going the whole round of creation, Saul says:

"Now I lay down the judgeship He lent me. Each
 faculty tasked
 To perceive Him, has gained an abyss, where a
 dew-drop was asked,
 Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at
 wisdom laid bare.
 Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to
 the Infinite care!
 Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
 I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more
 and no less,
 In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God
 is seen God
 In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul
 and the clod."

II

If the first part of our text suggests God's long

purpose in the realm of thought, the second sets forth that purpose in the sphere of action. In the one He thinks, He plans; in the other He acts, He executes. "And whom He foreordained, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Beginning in Eternity, God's purpose for humanity issues forth into Time, and thence swings full-circle back into Eternity again.

1. The Divine Calling: "And whom He foreordained, them He also called." "Here," says John Henry Newman, "was the first act which took place in time." Let us forthwith disabuse our minds of the idea that calling, in the Scriptures, signifies unreasonable arbitrariness on God's part. It is true that the doctrine has often been made to imply that; but the "sweet reasonableness" of God is nowhere more manifest than in His "calling" of individuals and nations. It is by misinterpreting the Divine call that untold injury has been wrought. Far from being a wooden, mechanical, arbitrary matter, calling implies mutual coöperation as well as mutual obligation. God calls men in various ways—by purpose, by birth, by growth, by reason, by parenthood, by endowment, by the Church, by the Son of His Bosom. But for all practical and rational thinking, God's call is not completed until it receives a hearty human answer—the soul's "Amen" to the Divine Pleader.

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Human obedience is just the correlative of Divine calling. God called Abram, and the father of the faithful obeyed by going out, not knowing whither he went. God called Moses, and the keeper of sheep answered by leading his own people forth from Egyptian bondage. God called Paul, and the consummation is witnessed in the fact that he "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." A pastor has recently been called to this church. But both the pastor-elect and the church, working together, are necessary to perfect the call. As a nation Israel was called, elected of God unto service. But history bears witness that the call is not yet consummated, for the very tragic reason that Israel misconstrued, as a nation, both its call and election.

The practical worth of this beautiful truth should be self-evident to all of us. Crowding us with vast privileges, it loads us with heavy obligations. Do you realize that you can short-circuit the current of the Divine purpose? Do you realize, furthermore, that you obstruct God's plan for you at the peril of your soulhood? Responding to Heaven's predetermined calling is not a subject merely for debate, my friends; it is a subject for prayer, for dedicated will, for the cleansing of the imagination, for the pursuit of an indomitable resolution. It may be that some of us are in the condition of a minister, of whom a friend tells me. For this minister accepted his call to be a preacher,

says my friend, in this way: As a young man, a wise, soul-winning minister said to him: "John, I have been thinking and praying about you a great deal of late; and I have come to the conclusion that God wants you to be a preacher." "But," protested the young man, "I have never been called to the ministry." Drawing closer still—so close indeed that he put his arm lovingly about the young man—this "good minister of Jesus Christ" went on: "But, John, you know God sometimes calls us, and we are so intent on listening to other voices that we cannot hear God's voice."

That was a new angle of approach for the young man. But it was good seed sown in good ground; he has been a preacher for many years now—all because he paused to listen to that Voice which had called and called—the still, small Voice, which had been lost in the roar of life's earthquake, wind, and fire. Ah, God's foredecision in Eternity has resulted in calling us to become like Jesus! Are you helping God to make your call effectual and sure? For you and your fellows, the universe contains no deeper design than that you, here and now, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

2. The Divine Justification: "And whom He called, them He also justified." We are here confronted by one of the great and distinguishing

ideas of Christianity—justification by faith. What do we mean by it? More important still, what does Paul mean by it, and what is its perennial value to the souls of men? There was a doctrine, tenaciously held by the Pharisees, which emphasized justification by works—the very same doctrine, by the way, which is at the forefront of the Christianity of to-day. The demands of the law required perfect obedience, and certain people sincerely undertook to fulfill all that the law exacted. But, as a matter of history, this effort had a twofold result. First, it overloaded the law with a mass of non-essentials, the essence of the law being lost sight of; and, second, it produced one of the most godless, wooden, uninviting types of character known to history—the Pharisee. All efforts after righteousness, apart from Christ, produce precisely the same results to-day. In keeping of many rules, man is rewarded by a dead formality; and a dead formality is the fitting crown for a pharisaic soul. Only the Eternal Christ, with the Divine Thought in His Mind and the Redemptive Passion in His Will, is equal to the pressing demands of a human spirit, submerged in evil and victimized by sin.

Now Paul was a Pharisee—probably as perfect a specimen as the system ever grew, or was capable of growing. Yet, in a flash—a blinding, illuminating flash out of Eternity—Paul saw the uselessness of the pharisaic system as a means of salva-

tion. In one dazzling moment, Christ Jesus became to Paul not only the end of the law, but infinitely more than the law could ever be, infinitely more than the law was ever designed to be; for, as he says in Galatians, "before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." At most, the law creates only a sense of sin; it offers no relief from the power, the guilt, the stain of sin. "But now," says Paul, "apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe."

So, when we undertake to analyze this imperial doctrine as held by Paul, and as interpreted by Christian scholars, we find ourselves face to face with these facts: First, the Holy God regards, or reckons, or idealizes (for God is the Everlasting and Undefeatable Idealist), unholy man as righteous; second, it is man's faith, and not his works or character—though he must have much of both and a great deal of each—that is reckoned as righteousness; third, the object of man's faith, which causes God—for it is none other than God Incarnate Who is the Thinker and the Doer—to count, or reckon, or consider him as righteous, is Jesus Christ.

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“But,” you say, “how can a Holy God count an unholy man righteous when he is unrighteous? Are you not simply juggling with moral imperatives?” Your question is quite proper, and one of the profoundest that wells up from the depths of the soul. “How can God be just, and at the same time the justifier of the ungodly?” If God can answer that question so as to satisfy the human spirit, He will have performed a work in comparison with which the creation of universes is small indeed. Well, God does answer the question in the Incarnation. If I owned the world, I would be willing to risk it on this proposition: That in the Incarnation—not simply by one aspect of it, but by the Incarnation in its absolutely perfect wholeness—the question of the soul’s justification by faith receives its overflowingly full and satisfyingly flawless confirmation. I affirm that by the whole Christ—the birth, the life, the teaching, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, the intercession—there is such a tremendous tug of infinite, holy, sacrificial Reality come down from the High Hills of God, that a sinful, helpless, lost human is undergirded and mysteriously drawn up out of the dripping ooze of his own wickedness—drawn up by his clingingly obedient will—drawn up and up the steep slopes of unflecked holiness until he crosses the threshold of Redeeming Goodness to abide at Home forevermore.

This is the century-old fact, my friends. Begin

away back with the Fathers, come right on through the mediæval period to Martin Luther, and thence on through the modern epoch represented by Kant, Schleiermacher, Ritschel, and Fairbairn; and, though one may emphasize some particular phase of the doctrine of justification by faith, while others insist upon another aspect thereof—all of them are forced by experience, by study, by life itself, to confess that God in Christ Jesus does forgive guilty human sin, and through faith in the Son of His Bosom, savingly justifies the ungodly. Our faith is counted unto us for righteousness because it is the stirring of that mystic, generative seed in the soul which will ultimately unfold into the fruits of perfect holiness in the Whitening Orchards of God. Foreknown, foreordained, called, justified—here are luminous sunbursts of revelation concerning God's long purpose for mankind.

3. The Divine Glorification: "And whom He justified, them He also glorified." Here is God's long purpose carried on beyond the temporal into the unseen, which is the eternal. And what does it mean to glorify? It means "to raise to a higher quality, condition, or consideration; to make fine, improve, embellish, refine." I wonder, then, if that is why nothing is said, in this pregnant passage, about dying or death? Is it because those Christian souls, whom we speak of as dead, have been raised to a higher quality or condition of

life? Have God's glorified ones been taken into such thrillingly intense life-relations that it would be an impertinence to mention the word death in connection with them? It may be even so. Anyway, like Enoch, they are not; for God takes them, refines them, exalts them, glorifies them. In a flash they escape from deathful clods into deathless glory! While we must not attempt to clumsily walk where angels tremblingly tread, still the Glorified Body of our Lord, during the forty days between the Resurrection and Ascension, is unspeakably precious to thought and faith just here. Once, at least, have we seen Personality clothed upon with Immortal Raiment—Personality either defying the normal claims of Matter and Space, or intelligently and sublimely using them for Its own irresistible ends. It is by no means a hopeless universe in which such an unveiling of Godhead is possible and demonstrable. That there should be embosomed at the heart of the worlds such a Person, no matter how the worlds may interpose as the soul breaks through them in order to get back to God, enchants life with a dawning splendour which brightens more and more unto the perfect day. "In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so"—heart-breaking and night-drenching as the truth would be—"I would have told you." Oh, it is this, and this alone, that enables us to lay our dead away in good hope. It is this that inspired Dr. George A. Gordon to write

me in the loveliest of letters, all aglow with the mellow tints of a sunset prophetic and aflame with the radiance of Life's New Morning: "*We labour on till the evening, and for reward we receive the freedom of the universe.*"

There are two types of mind beautifully sustained and boundlessly cheered by this revelation. One is the mind of the little child, unconscious of its insight, unaware of its harmony with the Soul of Goodness. Kneeling at a bedside one night, I heard a little girl praying for her mother, already among the glorified. The child knew nothing of the philosophy of prayer, nothing of the mystery of matter and spirit, nothing of the vastness of the universe. Yet I venture that she knew something more wonderful still: She knew that her beautiful mother was in God's dear keeping; and, therefore, it was just as reasonable for the child to remember her mother in her little prayers as it was for the mother, gathering her child in the encircling arms of love, to teach her child to pray. For Heaven not only lies around us in our infancy; it is only as our maturer souls are baptized in the cleansing, lustral tides of infant-like simplicity, that we can receive the vision of Him Who reigns—Here as well as There.

The second type of mind is evidenced in those who, while going the rounds of life and the years, keep inviolate the sacred gardens of inner greenness, trodden only by the privileged feet of Faith

and Adoration. There are other and ample walks for philosophy, for logic, for literature, for art, for science, and all their intellectual sight-seeing kindred—visitors out of all times and all lands. But there is one holy-white sanctuary of Reality where unanointed feet cannot walk. It is the place where the Soul kneels “hushedly,” where Mystic Birds of the Spirit sing silently but songfully, where Inner Eyes see what thought cannot think, what words cannot utter. And upon that spot light from the Glorified is constantly streaming. That One Face has taken the whole universe up into the light of Its countenance; and, far from vanishing, It is the abiding Light of the World, the Vine of Wonder, the Bread of God, the Water of Life, the Vanquisher of Death, the Open Door into Folds of Infinite Peace and Love. Verily, it is He—“Christ who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested at the end of the times for your sake.”

How, then, is God's long purpose to become a creative power in our lives? In one way, and one way only—by the Holy Ghost being shed abroad in our natures. One autumn a Long Island farmer related to me an interesting fact about corn. We were walking through his cornfields, when Autumn's kiss was turning everything into ripening gold. He asked: “Do you know what a fine arrangement there is between the tassel and the ear?” I did not know. I recalled what my

father told me while out in the Kentucky cornfields many years ago—that every silk at the end of an ear represents a grain of corn. “But,” said my farmer-friend, “while that is true, here is something more interesting still: It is only as the pollen falls from the tassel at the top of the stalk down upon the silk that fertilization takes place. Wherever this fails, there is no complete grain, only the semblance of a grain. I will show you what I mean.” With that he ripped back the husk of an ear. And there, sure enough, were the imperfect, lifeless, blistered grains. “Ah,” I exclaimed, “and so you have a Holy Ghost of the Corn!” “Call it that, if you choose,” he replied.

Well, my friends, if the Holy Ghost of the Corn is essential to the perfect grain, how much more is the Holy Ghost of God essential to the full realization of our own unfathomable natures! Without Him—Who takes the things of Christ and shows them unto our naturally closed minds and spirits—we walk a dusty way that has no ending. With Him—rebuking our unworthiness, challenging our motives, criticizing our low aims, encouraging our faint-heartedness, sharing our problems—life becomes a celestial thoroughfare, leading at last into Heavens which thought cannot conceive or imagination picture. Thus does the Eternal come throbbing in upon our present—even as one has caught it in song:

"I dreamed that I was growing old
 (It may be it was not a dream),
 I shivered in the frosty cold
 And trembled in the summer beam;
 It cost me many a bitter sigh,
 Until I knew it was not I.

"The house my Maker for me made
 Received His likeness in its form;
 His wisdom all its parts displayed,
 His beauty clothed its chambers warm;
 It is not so fair as years go by:
 What matter—for it is not I.

"The lamps that light its rooms burn low,
 Its music sounds more dull of late,
 And one—it may be friend or foe,
 Knocks loudly often at its gate;
 I tremble then—I scarce know why,
 My house he claims, it is not I.

"I am indeed a dweller there,
 A winter and a summer guest;
 Its rust and its decay I share,
 But cannot look therein to rest.
 I'm sure to leave it by and by—
 'Tis but my house—it is not I.

"I sometimes think, when lying down,
 For the last time I lock the door,
 And leave the home so long my own,
 That I shall find it yet once more
 So changed and fair I scarce shall know
 The home I loved in Long Ago."

VI

THE MIGHTIEST OF THE MIGHTY

"Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And even now I know that, whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee."—JOHN 11: 21, 22.

AS we look in upon this Bethany home, we see many great and mysterious forces at play. For the time being, the universe seems augustly focussed upon that house of death and mourning. Tears are there—and tears are the precious stuff out of which God builds spiritual rainbows. Sorrow is there—and sorrow is so essential in the divine economy that God leads His lost world to Calvary and says: "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." Hope is there—and when death has done its utmost, hope sings on through the darkness like some melodious night-bird, conscious of the night, and conscious, also, of the morning. The Power that understands and sublimely manipulates physical forces is there—and physical forces are the playground of a mystery profound and awe-inspiring. Still, I think the most tremendous thing at Bethany is yet to be mentioned. It is this: *The impression Christ had made upon the souls of*

Martha and Mary. Not only Martha, as in the text, but Mary, likewise, the moment she sees Christ, uses the very same words her sister uses: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

This, to my mind, is the most remarkable fact in a scene full of holy wonders. The impact of Christ's Person had gone so deeply into the roots of their being that they were convinced that nothing whatever could withstand the power radiating from His Presence. The Mightiest of the Mighty, Christ preventive and Christ curative—this is the study suggested by the text: "Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And even now I know that, whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee."

I

Consider the Preventive Christ: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Here is the clean, deep spiritual consciousness that, in the presence of Christ, the mightiest evil must be stayed. Not even death itself could stand before Him. "But, Martha," perhaps some one said, "you are beside yourself; listen to the voice of reason; you know that every one must die; your brother Lazarus has simply gone the way of all the earth. Be patiently resigned, O heart-broken woman, to the inevitable." Martha may have heard something like that. Yet, both Martha and

her sister Mary had had tidings from the Inner Soul of Things. Her spirit seems to have rooted itself in the ultimate reality as she says: "But you forget, or else you never knew, who this Mighty Lord is. Had my sister and I never known Him; had we never seen His face nor heard His voice, we, too, might have said that death is unavoidable. But now we know better: If the Lord had been here, our brother had not died."

Talk about miracles! Well, I believe that Christ wrought physical miracles, many more than we have any record of; but the spiritual consciousness created by Christ in those Bethany sisters is a far greater miracle, a miracle of a higher order, than the physical restoration of Lazarus. By producing this death-defying spiritual reality in the souls of Martha and Mary, let me repeat it, I say that our Lord performed a work superior to that of physically calling Lazarus forth from the tomb. For mind is mightier than matter, and the Christ-mind is mightier than the physical universe. "I maintain," says a philosophic scientist, "that you cannot explain the smallest portion of dead matter without a series of forces which imply mind, which imply direction." A flash of the Eternal Mind had set the being of these two women aflame, and their radiance burns like unquenchable fire through the darkness of physical death.

Let us apply this truth of the preventive Christ to nations. History—ancient, modern, and con-

temporary—bears witness that both governments and peoples have tried to live without serious regard for Christ. There have been, of course, noble Christian statesmen, as well as multitudes of individual Christians, who have wrought valiantly for Him in national and international affairs. But, after all, these are the exceptions, though they be that very salt of righteousness which has preserved civilization itself from utter putridity. As a whole, however, governments and peoples have been like a lot of bargain-counter devotees, scrambling after the cheapest articles with which to nourish their national soul. Kings have slighted Him; emperors have mocked Him; scholars have scorned Him; the rich have flouted Him; the poor have mistrusted Him—in short, this motley, gaudy, grasping, sinning humanity of ours, as multiplex as its races and as unstable as its governments, has wandered blunderingly on its Christless way. And now—

“When the nations lie in blood, and their kings
a broken brood,”

what are thoughtful people saying? Is it not something like this: “Lord, if Thou hadst been in the Reichstags and Parliaments and Senates, our brothers, our sisters, our sons, our daughters, our fathers and our mothers had not died. Something within us declares that, if Thy Spirit had been in the soul of the nations, these terribly crimson

years could not have stained the fair face of God's weeping world."

Surely, also, here is an appropriate wail for the Christian Church. Not infrequently does our Lord find it hard to move in and through His body. The Church's spiritual circulation is oft-times so poor that Christ's body seems to be paralyzed; and the present, at least, is no time for religious paralysis. Among other things, the Church is confronted by a twofold problem to-day. The first may be called the problem of orientation, of determining the points of the compass of the new social and political world. It is a tremendous problem, requiring statesmanship of the first order. And I, for one, heartily believe that God has His men, here and now, who are equal to the task of guiding the Christian Church into its wider adaptations for the service of mankind. I appeal to history. However dark the night, God has always had a Moses for His pilgrim hosts; and the need to-day is not one Moses, but many—many with their God-smitten faces set toward to-morrow's new Promised Lands.

But the second problem, it seems to me, is a more vital one still. If the first is a question of adequate leadership, the second is a question of Christianized personality in both leaders and followers. And this, I need hardly urge, is not a subject of ecclesiastical mechanics; it is the downright matter of spiritual regeneration, through

faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; it is redeemed, forgiven, empowered manhood and womanhood by the Holy Ghost of God shed abroad in human hearts. This, I grant you, is not new doctrine; but before God, everything else in comparison is archaic and subsidiary. If we do not know what birth from above and beyond the loins of the flesh is, we had better remain on our knees until the matter is made plain by that blessed Spirit Who worketh how, and where, and when He will. Viewless as the wind, He is yet more vitalizing than gentle wind-kisses laid upon fevered brows. For without the Holy Spirit, be assured that the most adequate leadership can only multiply wheels within wheels—wheels that go, but nowhere save to the scrap-heap of Christless inefficiency. Therefore, I affirm that only the preventive Christ can save organized Christianity from the accusing scorn of a later generation: "Lord, if Thou hadst been there, within the wheels and the ceremonies, during that most crucial period of history, the Church that professed Thy name had not failed."

The preventive Christ has something to say, I think, to those directly engaged in all forms of social uplift. Is it not pitiable to watch the light fade out of lives sincerely yearning to help others? Yet, sooner or later, there almost always comes to those who go forth to elevate humankind, without a personal and constantly renewed faith in Christ, the hour of disillusionment. They find that hu-

man nature, whether dressed in rags or silks, was not the easily rejuvenated nor the quickly transformable thing it was supposed to be. And with that discovery, the cynicism of many began; from that day they went back and walked no more with God or man. The glory of humanism is immense; but no man can be a true humanist whose heart is not primarily and perennially a shrine of the living Christ. Even in the presence of the mightiest outpouring of heroism the ages have witnessed, human nature refuses to be flattered. Under the glare of mephitic fires, human nature has had a terrible look into its own face, become better acquainted with itself, and lo! it is afraid! Applaud it as we may, unredeemed humanity is a kind of jungle in which both tiger and ape refuse to die, though incessantly growling and chattering because they know not how to live.

Long ago the greatest of humanists reminded us that men, knowing God, glorify Him not as God, nor give thanks, becoming vain in their reasonings, while their senseless hearts are darkened. "Professing themselves to be wise," continues Paul, "they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Sweeten it as we will, Christless humanity prefers this apostolic menagerie to ministering angels. Oh, Social Worker, Philanthropist, Altruist, Idealist, have

your fine schemes come to naught? Have your noble aims gone down in wreck and ruin? If so, the reason is this: They perished because you endeavoured to get on with an absent Christ. If He had been there, deliberately sought and gratefully recognized, thy beautiful plans, thy worthy work, thy lofty ideals had not died.

Moreover, the significance of the preventive Christ is apparent in every blasted fireside. Is there a more beautiful thing, in all the world, than a man and woman, united in the holy ties of wedded love, undertaking to build a Christian home? For Christian homes mean more to society than all of its seats of learning and all of its vast commercial establishments. If the Christian home be destroyed, what shall civilization do? One thing, and one thing only: Sow the seeds of its own self-destruction! What a hideous spectacle are the bones of these domestic skeletons scattered all the way from New York to Reno! In many instances they may represent husbands and wives who sincerely resolved to build a home, but later compromised on a mere house, and finally ended in the divorce court. And now behold the tragedy, the heart-break, the agony of it all!

Years ago scientists entered an Egyptian tomb, which had been sealed three thousand years before. Finding a beautifully carved sarcophagus of a little child, they were about to take it away for a museum. But they paused to decipher the in-

scription, which read: "Oh, my life, my love, my little one! Would God I had died for thee!" The restraining hand of thirty centuries of parental pathos seized them; in a twinkling those archæologists were standing with bowed heads, the tears staining their cheeks; they sealed the tomb and went away in silence. There are also, I doubt not, domestic tombs too sacred to be touched by human hands; God alone has the right to unseal and pass judgment upon them; knowing all, He alone can weigh all in balances at once just and merciful. But alas and alas! there are countless domestic tombs built by no other cause than this: Christless hearts walking a Christless way. Midnight's unsleeping ear has often heard the age-long wail: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, our home life had not died."

Nor may we disregard the necessity of the preventive Christ for lost individuals. Once lost people were associated almost entirely with shrieks and brimstone; and, truly, only fools smile at the abysses of woe a godless, self-willed human opens before his spirit. Molten flames were cooling indeed to a soul caught within a circle of fire fed by a progressive, deepening love of sin—self the centre of its universe and good its increasing horror! If your old theology bristled with bad metaphysics, your new psychology suggests the possibility of quenchless inner hells which make Dante's seem like a bed of roses but faintly scorched by extin-

guished fires. Oh, think not to evade your sin, nor escape from yourself, nor avoid the demands of that moral law older than the galaxies, by giving hostages to psychology, or gold to sugared, gold-hunting cults, or delusive days to the hodge-podge of "science which is falsely so-called." Neither these, nor others of their ilk, can be of genuine assistance to a soul whose absolute necessity is "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

This woman's voice, centuries old, yet new as the breath of morning, emphasizes the secret of your unrealized personal worth and satisfaction. "Lord," her voice keeps sounding on and on in the deeps of the soul, "if Thou hadst been here, my life had not been burdened by despair."

II

But my text suggests more than prevention, however essential; Christianity is positive, constructive, life-giving. It is even so in Martha's response to the curative Christ. "And even now I know that, whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee." There are few sublimer confessions of faith than this in the New Testament or elsewhere. Think of it: A dead man—dead for four days—dead and decaying—dead and entombed! "And yet, Lord," cries this woman, "though Thou wert not here to prevent his dying, even now, in the presence of death and final dissolution of body and soul, I know that,

whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee. Thou art mightier than the mightiest. Even death, at Thy voice, must instantaneously bestir itself and come rushing, thrilling back to life."

Suppose, therefore, by faith we bring our mightiest problems into the presence of the curative Christ. For the nations are very sick, society is very sick, individuals are very sick—all are sick unto death! Only leaves from the Tree of Life can produce personal and planetary health. It may be that our Lord's words about Lazarus shall have an even larger fulfillment concerning the present illness of the nations. "But when Jesus heard it, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." What, if after twenty centuries of opposition and patronizing Christ, the nations are at last driven into a divine *cul de sac*—pressed by Almighty God into a corner out of which they shall not come, until they definitely organize the principles of the Sermon on the Mount into a new and world-wide Magna Charta? I say: What if this be so? I say furthermore: It ought to be so! And I say again: It may, in reality, become so, if Christian men and women will work and pray, live and die for its holy consummation.

Consider, therefore, the present tangled maze of the nations and the curative Christ. Does any-

body doubt that the nations are in a tangle and a maze? Perhaps a blind alley would be a truer characterization. It were vain to attempt a description of the world-situation; it is simply darker than words can paint. Where is there any hope? Look as you may—north, south, east, west, even unto the ends of the earth—do you see anything, do you hear anything that offers a solution? Is any man, or all men together, wise enough, unaided by wisdom and power from on High, to lead the peoples out of this wicked darkness into God's righteous morning?

I do not believe relief is within humanity itself. Certainly I know, as you know, that tremendous strides and splendid alleviations would be at once realized *if*—what an infinite, abysmal *if* it is!—*if* capital and labour, wise and unwise, saint and sinner, politicians and partisans would honestly strive together for the amelioration of mankind. But that, my friends, is precisely the crux of the whole problem. Self-seeking, mean, pusillanimous, vile, these contending forces cannot, or will not, get together on a platform of Christian righteousness. "Then," you quite properly inquire, "is that the Gospel you preach?" God forbid! That is the sheer negation of the Gospel of Christ. My message is this: Let us bring our national and international problems, so much crushing dead-weight on the bent shoulders of humanity, into the presence of Him Who is mightier than the mighti-

est! For, believe me, notwithstanding wrangling politicians and hell itself, the truth of Christ for nations is incredible only because it has never been applied! But even now, with chaos and destruction and death abroad in the lands, I know that whatsoever He shall ask of God, God will give Him. This is why I am heart and soul for the League of Nations. I am not foolish enough to think that this, or any other league of international fellowship, can solve all of humanity's deep-seated problems. Nevertheless, I am for the present League of Nations because it faces the morning and not the sunset. As for the disgraceful, partisan, and personal opposition of large sections of the United States Senate, I am reminded of the words of Lamb to Coleridge: "You are one of the most perfect of men, with only this one slight fault, that if you have any duty to do, you never do it." In some respects an august and learned body, the Senate, with notable exceptions in both political parties, produces jazz music while the world burns and starves.

We may count upon the curative Christ, also, for the specific ills affecting the Christian Church. In the first place, ours is the anti-church age, as well as the moving-picture era; we walk by sight, we fly by gas, and we talk by electricity. The vast majority of people are too much absorbed in pleasure, riches, and the cares of life, to be much concerned about the things for which the Church

particularly stands. The result is nervous exhaustion, which is not especially conducive to the expansion and deepening of the inner life. Such a national and social mood inevitably brings its own penalty; for life, as one has said, "does not consist in eternally running to a fire." The soul must and will assert its rights, and woe betide the people who contest the soul's inalienable rights. So the problems might be multiplied indefinitely.

But what the Church needs is not simply to ponder over its liabilities; it needs, in the fear of God, as well as for its own and the world's salvation, to enthusiastically consider its assets and draw upon them. Let us frankly admit that the Church is afflicted by all the ills one can reckon. Let us go even farther and say, as Haig said of his heroic British Army, we are fighting with our backs against a wall. But it is a Wall that cannot crumble! Have we sufficiently thought of that? Consider, oh men and women, your infinite resources! "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her." If we are fighting with our backs against this wall of Divine Fire, we shall surely burn our way to victory. Again: "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will He appoint for walls and bulwarks." Let the Church of the living God forget her dirge by learning to fit her lips to the notes of this high music!

Once again: "They were a wall unto us, both by day and by night." A wall wrought of valorous souls, in the body and out of it! If our backs are buttressed by the noble living and the holy dead, how dare we make terms with fear or failure? Still again: "In that day: A vineyard of wine, sing ye of it. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Here is the momentary God! Our revolutionary history makes much of the Minute Man; but what is a world full of fleeting Minute Men compared unto the every-moment, eternally vigilant God? It is high time for us to stop talking about the Christian Church as if it were an intruder in the earth; when every throne and counting house is level with the dust, the towers and bulwarks and palaces of the Church of Jesus Christ will flame like banners of dawn over the ruins of a vanishing night. This is the creed for every lover of the true, universal Church: "And I know that even now, 'Thou Mightiest of the Mighty, whatsoever 'Thou shalt ask of God, God will give 'Thee." In his "Image of a Flower for the Church," Francis Thompson has anthemed our truth for this and for all ages:

"O Lily of the King, low lies thy silver wing,
 And long has been the hour of thine un-
 queening;
 And thy scent of Paradise on the night-wind
 spends its sighs;

Nor any take the secrets of its meaning.
 O Lily of the King, I speak a heavy thing,
 O patience, most sorrowful of daughters!
 Lo, the hour is at hand for the troubling of the
 land,
 And red shall be the breaking of the waters.

"Sit fast upon thy stalk, when the blast shall with
 thee talk,
 With the mercies of the King for thine awning,
 And the Just understand that thine hour is at hand,
 Thine hour at hand with power in the dawning.
 When the nations lie in blood, and their kings a
 broken brood,
 Look up, O most sorrowful of daughters!
 Lift up thy head and hark what sounds are in the
 dark,
 For His feet are coming to thee on the waters."

I could have wished to show how the curative Christ brings a new glow to social service; how He lends a holy enchantment to the domestic circle; how He imparts to the faded and fading individual a spiritual bloom which lasts through the years and beyond them. But the motive of all religious genius is expressed in this single sentence from one of Frederick Robertson's unpublished sermons. "In personal love and adoration of Christ," says Robertson, "the Christian religion consists, not in correct morality, or in correct doctrines, but in a homage to the King." Oh, if we are right with Christ, we are right with the uni-

verse, and all the right that is within it. Then indeed death has no terrors, because life is packed with deathless joys forevermore. One Sunday I passed the home in which Dr. David Gregg's earthly tabernacle lay. "And is it possible," I asked myself, "that the great preacher and child-like Christian has gone?" Later, standing by his side, while a single flower lay blooming upon his breast and the peace of God glowed in his death-eloquent lips, I said: "Yes, he's gone; but he has only gone into the Home not made with hands. My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Later still, at that perfect service in the church of which he was so long pastor, the gates of heaven seemed to open as unseen hands came through and drew the soul thitherward by the cords of that old yet ever new prayer: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

It were impossible to create a universe in which a life like David Gregg's could perish. And who made that noble life? Ah, none other than the Mightiest of the Mighty! Dr. Gregg preached and adored the preventive, curative Christ. Therefore, we shall read Martha's words with growing gratitude: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And even now, I know that, whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee."

VII

THE HOLY LAND OF LIFE

"And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."—EXODUS 3: 5.

THIS is God's way of letting us see Moses turn a sharp curve in the road of his destiny. It may be that Moses, up to this flashing hour, thought himself a huge failure. But life, like the mountain, requires perspective for adequate measurement or appreciation. Therefore, looking back upon the career of Moses preceding the burning bush, it appears as a splendid whole inwrought of meaningful details. Behold him as a babe in the ark of bulrushes. Think you the eyes of his mother and sister watched over him as jealously as did the Eyes of God? Behold him as a scholar-courtier. What training could have been more serviceable than those growing years in the Egyptian court? Behold him as a vindictive, ill-advised reformer. Did not his indignant outburst of temper, resulting in murder, admonish him of the wisdom of patience in the weary years yet to be?

Behold him as a refugee from Pharaoh's aveng-

ing hand. But in seeking refuge in the wilderness, did he not simply retreat more deeply into the Divine solitude, "the mother country of the strong"? Behold him as a shepherd tending his father-in-law's sheep. But it was while a shepherd of sheep that God made him a shepherd of the centuries. Now what is greatly explicit in the soul of Moses is vitally implicit in the soul of every human. Therefore, it may prove instructive and inspirational to study our text as a kind of guide-post to the Holy Land of Life, hearkening unto the Ancient of Days as He speaks not only unto Moses but unto us, saying: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

I

To-day, as in the case of Moses, place occupies an important position in the holy land of life. "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Then let us identify the place where Moses stood. "And he led the flock to the back of the wilderness." The wilderness! And what is a wilderness? It is a stretch of land inhabited only by wild beasts—that is one definition of a wilderness. It is a desert, whether forest or plain—that is another definition of a wilderness. It is a wild, a waste of any kind—that is a third definition of a wilderness. We do not need to insist upon exact topography in order to appreciate the

environment of Moses. It is enough to know that the place whereon he stood possessed the grayness, the dullness, the drabness of a wilderness.

And yet that place became suddenly glorious! There was a swift apocalypse of the Divine, a quick epiphany of the Eternal. "And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." Explain it as we may, I think this was none other than the Angel of the Covenant—the Eternal Word shekinahed in a desert shrub before He became incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Mysterious? Of course! Wonderful? Of course! Yet everything is mysterious and everything is wonderful. "If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life," says George Eliot, "it would be like hearing the grass grow, or the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of the roar which lies on the other side of the silence." When you consider the sheer fact of being, whether an atom of protoplasm or a constellation of blazing matter, the one is just as possible as the other, while both are *utterly impossible* to any canons of interpretation yet invented by the human mind.

In the last analysis, your physical science can explicate a wilderness shrub every whit as intelligently as it can define a seraph's wing. In either case, it dizzily leans over the edge of an abyss while sapiently discussing certain laws, darkening counsel by words, and systematically evading the

Reality back of laws and worlds. "The lush disclosures of the vernal time," the blooming, starry splendours of the night time, the electronic radiations of ultramicroscopic realms, the infinitely complex adjustments of mind and brain—these facts are not in the least abashed by Latinistic polysyllables. Before language was, they were. But to the serious mind they exclaim: "Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways: and how small a whisper do we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

One very practical question emerges here: What makes any place glorious? The answer is two-fold, as old as Moses, as new as you yourself. First, there is God, with His universal, besieging, heart-warm presence. "And the Angel of the Lord appeared"—when God exposes Himself the wilderness catches fire, the place becomes glorious. What is your wilderness? Is it a factory, or is it a fashionable club? Is it behind a counter, or is it in a drawing-room? Is it a career steeped in ignorance, or is it a laboratory full of intellectual brilliance? Is it a hall bedroom, or is it a palace? Is it pushing a wheelbarrow, or is it travelling in a private car? Is it the heavy load of poverty, or is it the golden burden of wealth? In each and all of these spheres, the possibilities of a wilderness—dry, songless, infertile—are not only impinging and immediate, but appalling, terrible, deathful. Only the holy invasions of God can rescue men

from those invisible, rainless lands where no spiritual water is, where inner wildernesses stretch on and on through the gray wastes of Time and Eternity. Do you wonder that the Angel of the Lord was en clothed in bush and fire? Then let Him possess your being, and all other wonders, though wonderful still, must still be secondary wonders. This is the finding of every human in every land in every age who has met God in life's way. The unity of the experience of godliness is as definitely established as the unity of natural law, and infinitely better worth realizing. "The only death to be feared," said Paracelsus, "is unconsciousness of the presence of God;" and the only life to be lived is the life which is hid with Christ in God.

The second factor of a glorious place is just plain, honest, eager, outgoing human responsiveness to the Divine. Let us read those wonder-fraught words again: "And the Angel of the Lord appeared *unto him*." Neither the fire nor the bush knew anything of God's presence; it was *through* them that God broke *into him*! And what happened to Moses? Precisely what happens to you, what happens to any human in a like moment: Moses came out to see God. He is born from *above*—not *again*, not by some strange, flesh-impregnated matrices, but by the down-coming, incoming, up-thrusting Spirit of Boundless Reality and Redeeming Love is he born anew. And in these days of socialism, syndicalism, and interna-

tionism, when the mass threatens to engulf the individual and thus destroy all genuine worth in the mass itself, we must needs say it insistently and unqualifiedly: *God's recipe for social reformation is individual regeneration.* There is no reason, except the lack of common sense egged on by the stupid old insanities of sin, why the two poles of the one truth should not be held in perfect equilibrium. We accuse our fathers of being stark egotists and individualists. Well, perhaps they did overemphasize the importance of the individual while they underemphasized the social and civic aspects of life. But is that any justification for you and me, enjoying a larger because an older, ever-unfolding revelation of God in Christ, foolishly rocking the boat of the individual until its initiative and values are spilled out and overwhelmed in swine-cursed depths of the socialistic sea? Nay, verily! We must retain our personal identity while we labour on for a finer, deeper, more Christian social unity.

The simple truth is, that fanaticism in either direction is contrary to the Mind of Christ. His teaching reveals an absolute mastery of the two phases of the one truth. The Kingdom of God—the Christian Society—is necessarily composed of regenerated individuals, men and women possessing and possessed by the Master's aims and ideals. Separated from the new tone and quality imparted to God-begotten personalities, all your remedies

for human ills—your chartisms, your socialisms, your idealisms, your bolshevisms—all and each spell abject failure. They plunge at last into a scientific jungle, recalling the picture etched by Frederick W. Robertson. "I saw a family of love," he says, "at the Zoological Gardens—five leopards together, kissing and playing with one another. By and by a keeper came with sundry joints of a murdered sheep. The brothers began to growl and bite, each seized a bone and went to his corner, snarling, and unable to enjoy for fear." Substitute for the five leopards any five modern nations, release them from the restraining influence exerted by Christ in the individuals of these five national groups, and you shall see a gory, bespattered human cage in which beasts of the jungle appear as innocent lambs. Do not remind me that this is hyperbole, after what this world has witnessed since 1914; for if you do, you shall be convicted out of your own foolish mouth.

✓ Nothing that Ezekiel described, nothing that Dante dreamed, quite equals the crimson terrors which have stalked our earth by midnight and stormed it by midday. Verily, the deeps have spit fire and the heavens have rained red. If he were writing to-day, perhaps the psalmist would thus paraphrase his own words: "Lo, I have seen the efficient spreading himself like a green bay tree, and the end thereof was a shell-torn pit." Talk about godless efficiency to lunatics and disciples of

economic determinism; but mention it not in the hallowed presence of millions of untimely graves on the land and in the sea; speak it not in the hearing of the maimed and the prematurely old, lest their wounds should curse you, lest their wanness should smite you by its scorching stillness. Looking backward, we shall always remember those who fought and died—

“And thunder stunned our ears
Streaming in rain of blood on torrents that
were tears.”

II

Anticipated already, yet I want us to consider the man—a closer-up view of the second factor in the holy land of life. “And he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.”

Here are two snapshots of a man in the throes of becoming another and larger, better man. We see Moses, first, in the clasp of a passively reverent curiosity. He looked, and in that very look the doors of his inner being swung slightly ajar. But he was not yet on the tiptoe of wonder; he was in a listening, Wordsworthian mood; he was becoming receptive, and receptivity is just the human half of all revelation. I suppose Moses had been marching, falling, struggling forward all his years

to this one celestial hour, when he changed eyes with God and beheld a new universe. For, if it be true that—

“All the past of time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder peals
Wherever thought hath wedded fact,”

then this was the fateful moment in which the thought of God became so completely one with the soul of Moses, that henceforth thought and fact were no longer twain but one pulsing reality in the lawgiver's consciousness.

He looked, and what did he see? He saw one of the most incredible sights the eyes of the mind ever behold: *He saw the miracle of the unconsumed!* True, the bush burned with fire—a kind of special signal from God to attract the shepherd's attention. Yet the bush aflame—that is not the deepest thing suggested here. Walk out over the hills and valleys these autumn days and you may see the domes of the trees, the shocks of corn—“those golden tabernacles of the autumn-tide”—and late flowers coming into their own serene autumnal loveliness after their gayer summer sisters have drooped and died—*everywhere* Nature's many-coloured bushes are burning with fire. But that, let me repeat it, is not the awe-compelling fact. Why, everything burns with fire—the rock, the tree, the ice, the clod, the atom, the mountain, the planet, the universe. We almost

literally eat the sun—at least there is no food but that which comes from the sun-fires. I saw my old friend, the shepherd, with his sheep in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, one day. The sheep were nibbling the grass, but the grass is only sun-fire transmuted into green vegetable blades. First there are the mineral deposits in the cellars of the earth—so much petrified sunshine. The vegetable descends into the mineral and by the mystery of chlorophyll, that leaf green substance which God has placed in the cells of plants and animal tissues, the mineral is changed into the vegetable. Of course you cannot eat grass; nevertheless, the grass must be eaten because it is the stuff of flesh; so the sheep is a digestive clearing-house for you and the sun: the sheep eats the grass and you eat the sheep. First the sun in the mineral, then the sun in the vegetable, then the sun in the animal, then the sun in the man. Strangely enough, we ultimately grow fat by eating the fires of the sun!

The bush burned and was not consumed, and lo, the universe burns and is not consumed. The worlds are so many magazines of fire, storehouses of combustible substances. And they burn continuously—why are they not consumed? Solely because of the directing, controlling power of the immanent, living God! He is abroad in the chariot of gravity; He camps in the atomic and molecular forces; He hides in the conservation of energy; He dwells in the liquids, solids, and heats; He or-

dains the orbits of worlds and commands the rising and setting of suns. And everywhere, in all matter and in all elements, the fires are ceaselessly raging. You think the *order* of wheeling systems and chemic galaxies is wonderful, and you do well to think so. But the greater wonder is this: That in their forward movements into space, and in their rotary whirl about and within themselves, they are not consumed! And why? "Lift up your eyes on high," cried a prophet who beheld the universe as an infinitely burning yet unconsumed bush, "and see Who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, not one is lacking." Oh, my Soul, remove thy sandals and walk tremblingly, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground!

The second snapshot is that of a man at tensely concentrated attention. "And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." The genius of the modern spirit finds voice here, with vastly more of reverence than that spirit often manifests. For it is a high hour indeed when a man is no longer curiously passive, but profoundly and inquiringly attentive. Then breaks the swift realization of the urgent, Godward immediacy of life. Turning aside *now*—not to-morrow or in Eternity—but *now*, before the "hypocritic hours" have cheated

the heart out of the gold shining in the throbbing present, man finds great sights flashing across his broadening way. All college and university life, all science, all civilization, and all invention begins to be in that soul unveiling itself by the burning bush. Newton turns aside to see a great sight, and we have the law of gravity.

Kant, Sir William Herschel, and Laplace turn aside to see a great sight, and they give us the nebular hypothesis. Lister turns aside to see a great sight, and we have the benediction of anti-septic surgery. Jenner turns aside to see a great sight, and humanity is blessed with the possibility of preventing smallpox by vaccination. Roemer turns aside to see a great sight, and we are given the measurement of light, speeding onward at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. Huyghens turns aside to see a great sight, and he discovers the nature of light, something that no human had done before him. He gave us the undulatory theory, by which we understand that light is composed of vibrations or waves in the ether.

And yet, the deeper sight to be seen on turning aside, is not the operation of laws and forces, but the behaviour of the Divine in a human soul. That is the grandest vision our minds can witness. Could Moses ever be quite the same after having been struck by the purifying lightnings of Deity? How could Paul longer remain Saul after being enveloped in the Damascus radiance and catching

the accents of Eternity breaking over the Hills of Time? How could John Wesley continue a religious formalist after that strange burning within his heart? Florence Nightingale's mother wrote to her father: "We are ducks who have hatched a wild swan." Not at all! They brought into the world a daughter so much greater than her parents that she was a sealed book to them. Yet this "wild swan," "The Lady With the Lamp," was very much of a human in whom the Divine behaved most gloriously.

You never can tell what particular individual shrine of humanity God will choose for His high indwelling. Mary Slessor was a Dundee factory girl. Without educational advantages, with the handicap of a drunken father, she wrought and studied at her loom. But God had chosen her for a peculiar mission; she finally went as a missionary to Calabar, where she mothered, loved, and taught those degraded black people for nearly forty years. Now behold the immanence of the Eternal within this God-enchanted woman; consider her shining countenance lifted upon those benighted folk; hear millions of them speak of her as "the Great White Mother who lives alone,"—and then say, what is grandly true, that God's activity upon the earth is always highest and divinest in a dedicated human.

What a wonderful chance did God get in Edith Cavell! Surely the Divine tears must have been

temporarily wiped away, as Heaven succeeded in commanding this doomed nurse to make a gesture of goodness in the heart of so much wickedness! She turned aside to see the great sight of humanity—larger than patriotism, deeper than life, braver than death. “A people with the heart of beasts made wise concerning men”—to borrow Kipling’s unforgettable line—trampled her like a white flower in the mud; but the imbruted hands that defiled her broken body could not soil the immaculate beauty of her soul. Edith Cavell will always loom across humanity’s spiritual landscape as fair as some green-bosomed meadow set in the soul of June. Nothing in the world is quite so splendid as when God captures a human being for Himself, acting so regenerately and redeemingly through such a personality, that the ages turn aside to see *why* that spiritual bush burns lustrously on even while it is agelessly unconsumed. God may and does journey forth in chariots of thunder and lightning; but God also travels in lyric, songful feet, because the Heavenly Shepherd speaks whitely and enfoldingly in that melody of Alice Meynell’s in “The Shepherdess”:

“ She walks—the lady of my delight—

A shepherdess of sheep.

Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;

She guards them from the steep.

She feeds them on the fragrant height,

And folds them in for sleep.

“ She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

“ She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.”

III

Finally, both place and man are intelligible only through the God within them. This is the explanation of Moses and his luminous acacia cathedral. Then what are some of the permanent characteristics of this unimaginably Glorious Person? First: He is the Speaking God. “God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.” Neither scientific terminology nor metaphysical cloudiness is becoming here; either may confuse, both cannot expound. Therefore, we are supremely interested in this fact: *God does speak to men, and men know that God speaks to them.* Of course the how, the when, the where are interesting, but they are not fundamental. Is it incredible that the God Who makes the eye may also be able to *see*? Is it past

believing that the God Who makes the ear may also be able to *hear*? Is it altogether strange that the God Who makes the tongue may also be able to *speak*? Any person who regardfully considers these simple and thought-provoking facts talks less and less of logical processes as he engages more and more in listening to the Voice Divine. "The highest truth may be lived," said the late Professor Gwatkin in his Gifford lectures, "but it cannot be fully stated in logical form!" Men usually speak by sounds while God quite as usually speaks by silences.

And yet He speaks, and He speaks continuously. Does He not use the golden-mouthed heavens to declare His glory? Does He not require the firmament to exhibit His handiwork? Does He not command the day to utter speech unto its brother day, and night to show knowledge unto its sister night? Yet, while there is neither speech nor language, and while their voice is not heard, their line goes through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. But God speaking in and through the laws of the universe is a small thing compared with the God Who articulates Himself to conscience and consciousness. It is just the abysmal difference between Mind impressing itself upon Matter and Mind expressing itself through Mind. Perceiving this miracle wrought in the sanctuaries of personality, no wonder the human exclaims: "Lord, when I have Thee, what

care I for heaven and earth? These be only trinkets clinging to Thy skirts of Infinite Majesty!"

Second: He is the Holy God. "And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." If our day is in desperate need of one thing more than another, it is this: A revival of the sense of the Divine Holiness. The hour has struck for men to call a halt on lipping that sugary benevolence which they have enthroned in their fallen imaginations and lustily declared that, therefore, such sweet-meatish benevolence is likewise enthroned in the universe. For we may talk about justice and square dealing and brotherhood and international fellowships until our tongues become as empty as our hearts; but until men are made awfully and reverentially aware that they are personally responsible to a God of unutterable and absolute Holiness,—Who cannot tolerate the shams of capital, the selfishness of labour, the gauds of society, the haughtiness of learning, the formalism of the Church, and the political mockeries of the state,—there will be no forward movements which are not ultimately iniquitous plunges, and no individual peace save the peace of worldly compromise and spiritual death. "And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."

This is not a fable of the olden years. It is the

pointblank, naked Reality of Things, the Everlasting Yea of a universe aflame with the white-hot fires of holiness. Man is not incurably afraid of mere physical blackness; it is not that that smites the soul with quivering terror; rather, it is something like David saw on entering Saul's tent—"a something more black than blackness." The soul devoid of righteous fear of a Holy God is self-doomed. "It is not Christianity, as I view it," declared Horace Bushnell in his memorable Divinity School sermon in Harvard University in 1848, "to go forth and declare that God is so good, so lenient, so fatherly a being, that He forgives freely. No; God is better than that—so good, so fatherly, that He will not only remit sins, but will so maintain the sanctity of His law as to make us feel them." In the nature of things, every brazen, sinful soul is at last afraid to look upon God, though he carry through all the treacherous ways of the flesh no grace, no beauty, no humility of the sin-smitten, hiding face. May God grant us hearts which beat responsive to the awful truth in Isaiah's vision. For when kings and empires are dead and universes cease to be, we shall still have to do with that Holy God worshipped in the seraphic antiphony: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory."

Third: He is the Delivering God: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their

cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." Now, is this fact or fiction? Is it ancient history or ageless reality? I want to know the truth within the moulds containing the truth; and you have the right and duty to know it also. I believe that God was abroad in Egypt on His errand of deliverance; do I believe that He is abroad in America, in England, in France, in Germany, in Africa, in Japan, in Russia? Verily, I do—and for me and my generation it is a vastly more important belief than merely to believe that God delivered the Israelites out of the hands of the Egyptians! There is no room for a past-tense God, either in thought or the universe. And in this creed I find myself in excellent company. When General Foch was asked to tell how the Great War was won, he replied: "Explain why we have won? I couldn't. We were the instruments. God was there." Oh, tell it to the kaiser while he squats in Holland watching the worlds go by; tell it to the devil while he fathers and propagates lies; tell it to yourself while you question and quibble! *God was there, and God is here*—a God of infinite deliverances, a God of eternal victories, a God of stainless right, a God of compassion—the God of the Manger, *the* God of the Carpenter Shop, *the* God of the Temple, *the* God of the Mount of Beatitudes, *the* God of Calvary, *the* God of the Guarded Tomb,

the God of the Resurrection Morning, *the* God of the Sundered Heavens and Welcoming Hosts!

Fourth: He is the Commissioning God. "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayst bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt." But "who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?" Never mind about who you are, or what you are! God will mind those essentials, if you will mind your call of destiny. What! Is there no Egypt for you to invade—no benighted land close by in which slaves of sin are toiling furiously? Have you no Pharaoh to face—no swart, dark-hued Egyptian of the soul who contests your progress in the ways of the Lord Christ? Have you no loved ones, no friends, no countrymen in spiritual bondage, so direfully more oppressive than physical bondage that the bodies of men may be free to go where they will while the men themselves remain gilded serfs? "*Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh.*" Your Pharaoh may be a Macbeth of villainy, or a Midas of avarice, or a Judas of treachery, or a Sapphira of falsehood, or a Cleopatra of lust, or a Jezebel of hatred.

For Pharaoh is sexless and timeless; indeed, the historic Pharaoh may be just another name, and not altogether inappropriately, for the Spirit of Evil. Therefore, say not, "Who am I?" because God—I *Am That I Am*—shall certainly be with

thee! Thou shalt forsake all the dark dungeons of the mind, all the taskmasters of appetite, all the autocracies of hate! Thou shalt cross all the red seas of affliction, all the gray wastes of despair, all the dusty deserts of pursuing hosts! Yea, thou shalt come at last, charioted by Love older than the suns and weaponed by Righteousness stronger than the seas, into a Land forever flowing with the White Milk of Truth, forever sweetened by the Golden Honey of Life. Oh, be not an outcast from His presence! For the song of that once homeless wanderer in London streets may be indeed the experience of every homing soul:

“Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!—
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

“The angels keep their ancient places;—
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

“But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

“Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!”

VIII

THE TWO ABRAHAMS

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."—HEBREWS II: 8.

I HAVE not chosen this text as a mere point of departure for a patriotic discourse. Patriotism will have its rightful emphasis, as it deserves to have; but, primarily, my purpose is to institute a comparison between Abraham the Chaldean and Abraham the American. The effort may prove either absurd or elevating. If in itself my idea is artificial and unreal, of course the whole thought-structure will be ridiculous. On the contrary, if reason and religion are at the soul of the thing, the comparison may be thoroughly worth while. Now I think that there is a genuine kinship between these two souls—the ancient and the modern. Naturally, some things are taken for granted. For example—that the first Abraham was a man and not a myth. Such an assumption may be shocking to Higher Criticism. But no matter! Much of the Higher Criticism is abun-

dantly cared for by the Highest Criticism, which is just plain common sense. At any rate, Higher Criticism—at least large sections of it—is somewhat like the German scholar as defined by Balzac: “He is a man who finds a little hole in the ground, which he proceeds to convert into an abyss, at the bottom of which is to be found not the truth—but one German.”

I assume, moreover, that their likeness must consist of the stuff of the soul—not in environment, not in heredity, not in civilization. For these are surface matters in the presence of the soul itself. Only as we break through the crust of circumstance may we come in sight of the soul's imperishable goods. Civilization is just the furniture which man is constantly rearranging in his world-home. The furniture may be designed after new models; it may even wear out or it may be retouched. Yet the soul is more than its setting, more than its furniture, more than all those vastly modifying forces named education, art, and science. Therefore, it is when we peer through and behind the furniture used by these two men that we come upon their abiding kinships.

I

Consider the first of the resemblances of the two Abrahams. “*By faith.*” Men are variously gifted. From the beginning of time, God has dowered His sons with manifold gifts. Moses had

a genius for law; Joshua for war; David for psalmody; Angelo for sculpture; Savonarola for reform; Shakespeare for rhythms; Beethoven for harmonies; Webster for eloquence. Thus does each of the starry names shine on in the firmament of history, shedding forth a splendour all its own. But Abraham, the Chaldean, does not belong in the illustrious company whose names have been called. He was gifted in another direction and in a higher fashion, if possible. His was the gift of faith. He could see the unseen; he could hear the unvoiced; he could touch the intangible; things that seemed not he dragged out into the realm of things that are; he could start out surefootedly from Nowhere, walk an unknown road, realize a solid foundation every step of the way, and arrive in due season in the City of God's Eternal Somewhere.

This is the distinction of Abraham; it is the distinction faith confers upon the soul; all men of the first order possess, and are possessed, by faith. But in Abraham of old the fires of faith burned brighter, flamed higher, and cast a larger radiance than in any other save the One Who said: "Before Abraham was, I am." "By faith"—not by stately speech, not by artistic genius, not by statesmanship, not by constructive ability, not by learning—but by faith, the mothering bosom whence all of man's supreme qualities take in their nutritious milk, the Father of the Faithful keeps

on his tranquil stride across the ages, an ever-returning and an ever-going pilgrim whose soul-windows shed forth a kindly light upon the darkest gloom.

Now I am among those who hold that faith, also, was the supreme gift of our Western Abraham. I know Carlyle said that no ruler in history has made so much of prayer and faith in God as Oliver Cromwell; but Carlyle said that because he did not know or appreciate the faithing-power and praying-passion of Abraham Lincoln. It was by faith, and not by genius, not by brilliance, that our wilderness pioneer, weaponed with the keen-edged axe of justice, went out to chop down the dark and terrible slave-forest which had become rooted in our American soil. "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not themselves," said he, "and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it." What is this but the voice of faith, ringing like the deep and golden tones of a cathedral bell across the troubled seas of human life, reminding men that yonder on the Coasts of the Infinite watches One Who knows, and remembers, and requires?

Faith in the rule of a just God—that is the power that saved the Union, the power that made it possible for the Union to strike the decisive blow in making the world safe for democracy in the good year 1918. "I wish to say, deliberately," said President Schurman, of Cornell University,

in an address on Scientific Agnosticism in 1895, "after reading many lives of Lincoln and trying to understand the history of the Civil War, that in my opinion the Union could not have been restored without the unseen, but none the less real, power that came to the nation through Lincoln's belief in God and confidence in His moral government of the world." The great scholar is right. It was by faith that this modern Abraham went forth to speak his word and do his deed for God and mankind. What was the last Act of Congress Lincoln signed? The bill decreeing that "*In God We Trust*" should be inscribed on all our national coin. Thus we, too, have an Abraham to show the passing ages. He will keep up with the years because the years like to keep step with a man who walks by faith. "Now faith," according to Moffat's translation, "means we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see." Pay a mental visit to those fratricidal days when the garments of brothers were rolled in blood. Was it not Lincoln's confident soul that hoped against hope, convinced that what he could not then see would become historic fact—the saved Union, as the Father of Waters flows unvexed to the Sea? For behold—

"Across the page of history,
As in a looking-glass,
Or on a moving-picture screen,
The nation's heroes pass;

With sword and mace and pen they pace
In epaulets and braid,
And some, with ruffles at their wrists,
In linen fine arrayed.

“But at the long procession’s head,
In loose, ill-fitting clothes,
A lanky woodsman with an axe
Upon his shoulder goes;
In every patriotic heart
The figure lean and tall
Is shrined beside the starry flag,
For Lincoln leads them all.”

But Lincoln was led by faith, inspired by faith, wrought superhumanly by faith, has become agelessly masterful by faith! “Faith in God,” he said, “is indispensable to successful statesmanship.”

II

We discern a second likeness between our two Abrahams in the name they bear. Abraham—what does it mean? This—“Exalted Father,” “Father of a Multitude.” What other name would you have for the Chaldean? There is no other. God had no second name for him; no other name would fit the man and his work; the old, eternal genius of the universe was simply doomed to name him Abraham. Why not, also, give the son of Nancy Hanks Lincoln another name than that of Abraham? Try it, and you will readily

see. Let us, for example, call him Julius, or Napoleon, or William, or James, or Charles, or George, or Alexander. Why, it were impossible—it makes a discord in the melody of nomenclature! No name fits him but Abraham, but that name fits him perfectly. It has the lovely charm of antiquity, the colour of faithful old hills, the gnarled strength of mighty oaks, the tone of sublimely rolling seas, the fertile patience of unexhausted prairies, the calm of broad-breasted rivers, the majesty of immeasurable stars, the homeliness of wayside weeds and grasses, the variety of seasons with their punctual return, the lure of sunsets that wash the western skies with cleansing splendours down. It would almost seem that God was experimenting in finding a name for the ancient faith-pioneer; as if He half-pronounced the name, paused, and said: “No; Abram, Exalted Father, is not to be thy full-blown name, but Abraham, Father of a Multitude, shalt thou be called.”

Thus did the primeval man and the primeval name take their place in the genesis and permanence of history; they harmonize with the vast orders and movements of life and the universe; henceforth they could be separated no more forever; wherever the man went the name would go, and these twain would travel everywhere and always. Likewise, our unique modern man and his name must travel the dusty and rainy centuries together—even that Abraham who set out from the

Kentucky wilderness, journeyed on to Indiana, thence to Illinois, thence to the White House, thence across all lands and all seas, and thence—well—

“ Say—if men ask for him—he has gone home,
Home to the hearts of all that love their kind;
And they that seek him there, henceforth, shall
find

Their man of men—in all men’s hearts at home.
The Mother made him from her common loam,
And from her world-wide harvest filled his mind,
Poured by all paths, that from all quarters wind,
As in old days all highways poured to Rome.
She said: ‘ I make a universal man,
Warmed with all laughter, tempered with all tears,
Whose word and deed shall have the force of fate.
I made not seven in all, since time began,
Of men like these. They last a thousand years.
They have the power to will, the will to wait.’ ”

III

Consider, moreover, the providentialness of the two Abrahams. “ By faith Abraham, when he was called.” The philosophy of Divine calling seems to be this: God has a purpose to be realized in the fields of Time; He wants a man in the soil of whose being that purpose can root itself; then He hunts His man, sometimes hunts him for ages. Finally tracking His man down to the Heart of Things, God says: “ Come! I need thee, and thou needest Me. Henceforth we must be workers together.” Thus, there was a generic reason for

Abraham, and God called him—called him out of the invisible, called him out of the uncreated, called him out of the pregnant mysteries and whispering silences. And Abraham came! God made him a lustrous window in His human temple through which the lamp of faith is seen quenchlessly burning. "But," you ask, "why did not God call Terah, or Nahor, or Haran, instead of Abraham?" Well, I reckon you will have to carry that unanswered question to your grave; certainly you will get no completely satisfying answer to it in the tangled wilds and mystery-thickets of the years. Enough to say that Abraham was a providential man—a provided man—for a gigantic task.

So, also, Lincoln's providentialness is as assured as Abraham's. He, too, was called of God. God's voice is as familiar to the Big South Fork of Nolen Creek in Kentucky or the Sangamon in Illinois as it is to the Tigris or the Euphrates. It has the same tones and carries the same message, east or west, up or down. God made His world with perfect acoustic properties, though most people have fashioned unto themselves exceedingly dull ears. These are they who say that God quit business millenniums ago. Such talk amounts to this: God started to create with Adam, and managed to muddle through with Abraham as a result, when He was compelled to stop making the major humans because of sheer exhaustion in creative

power. All such thinking is, of course, a gross misreading of God's ways. He is everlastingly the Living God—not a vanquished Might-Have-Been.

Far from His creative power being depleted in a Moses, does not the ampleness of the lawgiver rather argue that there are infinite millions of leaders still resident in the loins of the Almighty, ready to be launched forth in arks of bulrushes on the Niles of Destiny as occasions demand. Creative variety is one of the awe-inspiring habits of God. One of the lonelings of the race, the early Abraham goes forth to the mystic mountain altar to offer up his only son—token of the heights of sacrificial obedience to which his soul had slowly climbed. The centuries patter like raindrops back into the Sea of Eternity and in the midst of the years another Abraham is dropped from the Creative Fingertips into that Southern wilderness to fertilize the dry ground of humanity. Resembling his illustrious ancestor, he is yet interestingly different, proving, as the scientist says, that infinite variety is the law of the universe.

"But," you ask again, "why did not God call Seward, or Chase, or Sumner, or Greeley to guide the nation through its ordeal of fire and terror?" Some may give one answer, some another, while none may be correct. Nevertheless, I think God called Lincoln because he was the only man equal to the job. The work required a leader wrought

out of the ages; peculiar ancestral gifts were essential; a unique environment was necessary—one so schooled in the University of Hard Knocks that he could come away with a diploma signed by Wisdom itself. Not the palace, but the cabin; not the academy of the classic grove, but the law-circuit of the frontier; not the Forum, haunted by Tully's periods, but the slave mart, mournful with the moans of the oppressed; not plenty, but poverty; not pomp, but pity—these were the hard and glorious settings of that soul greatly gentled and wondrously strengthened by God. Therefore, when the task was ready to be done, this man was God's answer to His own self-fulfilling purpose.

IV

The inheritance of our two Abrahams is likewise suggestive. What was the inheritance of Abraham the Ancient? It was not real estate, not some square miles of dirt named the Promised Land, clothed with verdure or browned with desert sand, flowing with milk and honey or bellowing with cattle upon a thousand hills. Abraham's inheritance is vastly greater than this. Are we not challenged to measure it by the imagination of God Himself? He Who makes and counts the stars said: "Behold their number, Abraham; even so shall thy children be through the ages." He Who sculptures every grain of sand said: "Behold the sands upon the seashore, Abraham; thy progeny

shall be as multitudinous." Why, Abraham is a fixed sun in the heavens of faith from which every human faith-ray the generations through has been kindled. Realizing the futility of words, we simply call him the Father of the Faithful. There is a kind of dear old familiarity in the title, reminding us of domestic sanctity and variegated seasons and cosmic mystery and childhood's wonder. The name fits quietly in with the profounder strains of the human spirit, without jar or discord. We somehow make Abraham and Faith goldenly synonymous, even as sunshine and bloom are expressions of the selfsame solar energy. Wherever a little babe of faith has cried in the long night of time, the Father of the Faithful has stood tenderly and ministeringly by, soothing the cry into a croon, swelling the croon into a song. Great indeed—great beyond measure—is the inheritance of Faith's Pioneer.

What shall we now say of the inheritance of our martyred Abraham? More golden than gold, it stretches beyond the frontiers of the land to which he gave the last full measure of devotion. Those long legs have at last stepped over the tumbling seas and walk in all the highways of mankind. No longer does he belong to America alone, but all nations claim their share in him. They have a right to him and to what he represents. Woe to the ruler or rulers who would deprive men of their inheritance in this man! Time is against

them and all autocracies; the might of right is on the side of democracies; and Lincoln is the foremost democrat of modern times. He is the uncompromising foe of class consciousness, the champion of the rights of man, a prophet of the justice of God to all peoples. "He often declared," says John G. Nicolay, "that the Sermon on the Mount contained the essence of all law and justice, and that the Lord's Prayer was the sublimest composition in human language."

"Who won the war?"—that is a question which has been asked in various quarters. One answer is: The free peoples of the world won the war. All honour to the millions slain and to the myriads of the broken who, through the limping years, shall brokenly live on! Thanks be unto God for the heroic old, the brave middle-aged, the valiant young—for fathers and mothers, for husbands and wives, for lovers and sweethearts, who placed themselves upon the altars of freedom. Nobler human children were never suckled at the breasts of Mother Earth! Greater statesmen and greater generals the ages cannot show! Coming generations will call them blessed—coming generations, mark you, not the generation that is going. It is too busy with its partisanship, meanness, and selfishness to see beyond those "miserable aims that end with self." No! the great actors in the world-tragedy are too near, their victory is too recent, and their work is too great, while most of us

are too blind and mean to see or appreciate them. But have no misgivings—"the wise years will decide." Feet of clay cannot stand within the Temple of Immortality nor can feet of right be slandered and scorned therefrom. So Time, the wise old guide, will silently pick out the Sons Immortal and guide their steady feet into the Temple of Fame, whither the feet of posterity will eagerly tend, while we, their loud defamers and partisan critics, will lie smugly undisturbed within the ample and weed-grown spaces of oblivion.

Have you considered the biting sarcasm that speaks out large and eloquent in the Voice of History? Poor mortals—what short memories have we! Is our much reading of history and biography, after all, in vain? Have we forgotten that Pericles was not as great as some of his neighbours assumed themselves to be? There must have been many orators in Greece who thought that they were at least equal to Demosthenes. Long before Waterloo, there were generals galore who had not defeated Napoleon for the colossally disappointing reason that opportunity was lacking. John Adams, being jealous of Washington, poured out the following stream from his fountains of bitterness: "Would Washington have ever been Commander of the Revolutionary Army or President of the United States, if he had not married the rich widow of Mr. Custis?" And that, too, after he himself had nominated Washington to be

Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army! Verily, if politics make strange bedfellows, self-interest and human nature are near enough of kin to sleep in the same room and under the same bed! Among Washington's enemies were General Gates and Thomas Conway, an Irish-French soldier of fortune, who said: "A great and good God has decreed that America should be free, or Washington and weak counsellors would have ruined her long ago."

How strangely familiar are these words of six-score and ten years ago! Is the spirit-control of one Thomas Conway—speaking after the manner of our interplanetary methods of communication—playing pranks with present-day spellbinders in politics and in the pulpit? Maligned and opposed both in the Army and in Congress, Washington at last said: "But with many, it is a sufficient cause to hate and wish the ruin of a man, because he has been happy enough to be the object of *his country's* favour." To take one other example—in returning to the question of who won the war—did not Horace Greeley sincerely think that he was Lincoln's superior? "Mr. Lincoln," he said, "is not a great man, and I am too old." What an inspiring confession of dotage is this, and all made by an editor!

"Who won the war?" Why, Almighty God and the soul of Abraham Lincoln. That is the most direct answer to the inmost heart of our

question. America undoubtedly cast in—and at the right time—the balance of power that tumbled the Hohenzollern dynasty into the dust. But remember, it was Abraham Lincoln who, under God and by the valour of the Union Army, politically saved America that America might save the nations from the leaden heel of autocracy. Oh, what an inheritance has this Abraham from the Sangamon received! Republics unborn shall continue to spring from his loins. He has made his home in the heart of childhood, even as birds make their nests in whispering trees. He lingers by the graveside of every Ann Rutledge, mingling the weeping rain of his tender heart with the torrents which fall upon the voiceless sod. He has stolen into the dreams of that wide-eyed youth away back in the hills, waiting the call of the enchanted hour when he, too, shall go forth to cast up highways for the rhythmic feet of freedom. He stands thoughtfully and rebukingly over against the one who has leased his soul to the defiling imps of avarice and says: “Cast out these demons and be a man—a big, generous, self-giving man—worthy the name of an American citizen.” He is the torch-bearer in the long line of the backward races, marching slowly but victoriously on to democracy’s new lands of promise. He is the inspiration of motherhood’s sacrificial heart as she gives the fruit of her womb to march and die, if need be, with liberty’s embattled hosts.

Strong as the rails he split, tender as the fledglings he placed back in the nest, patient as the hills he climbed, clear as the mountain brooks he waded, humorous as the gentle laughter at the heart of things, wise as the Seven Wise Men without their foolishness, plain as a blue-back spelling book, determined as a thirsty root in quest of water, impartial as gravity, just as Aristides and meek as Moses, artless as homespun and eloquent as mercy, transparent as noonday and sweet with the forgivableness of the Lord Christ, has not our Abraham received an inheritance as boundless as the race and as ongoing as the years? Well may we sing with Edwin Arlington Robinson:

“For he to whom we had applied
Our shopman’s test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of men,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancour with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

“For we were not as other men:
’Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.”

V

Finally, there is similarity in their unknown goal. "And he went out, not knowing whither he went." There are two possible interpretations of this phrase. Quite evidently it means that the patriarch was circumscribed by his ignorance of to-morrow. Human life is necessarily conditioned by the unknown. No man can prove that the sun will rise to-morrow. The fact that the sun has risen for millions of years is not absolute proof that it will rise in the morning. Probabilities are vastly reassuring; the sun has risen so long that we are not disturbed about the possibility of its not rising again. And yet, as I have said, this is not one of the things which come within the demonstrable realms of knowledge. It was even so of Abraham's quest: He went out, not knowing whither he went; he could only know the goal by making the journey. Life is like that; personal fellowship and communion with God in Christ is like that; we must travel the highways of Christian experience before sensing the Christian reality. Yet there is also another explanation of the words: Abraham, in going out, was destined to go so far that not even his own vast genius of faith could measure the distance he would travel. Suppose you turn the hands of the clock of history backward. Put yourself by the side of Abraham. Tell him that all that his Infinite Lover has whispered in his ear shall prove true. Emphatically reassure him that

it shall all come to pass—his faith-children shall be like the sand-grains and star-galaxies for number. Do you imagine, for one moment, that Abraham could literally have comprehended it all? Certainly not; and for the very good reason that such a fact, under such circumstances, would have been utterly incomprehensible. His far-flung goal is infinitely vaster than his human imagination was capable of visioning.

Is it otherwise with Abraham Lincoln? Stand, in fancy, by the side of Nancy Hanks Lincoln on February 12, 1809. Tell her that the child she has laboured into life is to become the Great Emancipator. Could Lincoln's mother have believed you? Just about as readily as she could believe that that log cabin was instantly transformed into a palace while you were talking! Now suppose, years later, you hunt out somewhere in the hills that strange, ungainly, ill-clad youth splitting rails. Say to him: "Well, Abe, I've come to tell you that you are going to be President of the United States some day. The hand that wields the axe will eventually wield the pen that shall strike the shackles from millions of human beings." Could that Hercules of the Hills have accepted your words? Of course not. If not entirely beyond the power of faith itself, the fact would have been so tremendously remote as to provoke only an incredulous smile.

But behold! The solid feet of fact have out-

distanced the soaring wings of fiction! History has surpassed the dream. Life has more than actualized the thought. The Intangible has compelled us to touch It. The viewless has forced us to view It. Things that were not have invaded the world of things that are. Arnold's dictum about miracles never happening is replaced by a better one: Miracles cannot *happen*, for the very excellent reason that they are *ordained*. The Eternal does not thrust Himself into the fields of Time because, without Him, Time itself could not be. How could God come back into a world which He has never left for a single instant? Thus, that little lad of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, going out, not knowing whither, has gone so immeasurably far because, all his life long, he tried to keep up with God. Sometimes the pace was swift and furious; sometimes the road was long and dust-covered; sometimes the hills were steep and the valleys were thick with thorns. But our Ulysses of the Plains was a good traveller; he made friends on the way; he had an eye for the holy average of human life; he carried an ear for both the homely and the sublime; he kept his heart-fountains full of the refreshing waters of loving-kindness. So he has travelled very far and he still travels on. His goal is so great that epochs undawned alone can measure it. But some time, when all the Pilgrim Hosts shall have found the path leading to the Home of Justice, Mercy, Brotherhood, and Peace, they shall

be greeted by one of the Noblest Sons of the House and welcomed in the name of the Ever-living Love.

- “ O thou that on that April day
Went down the bitter road to death,
While freedom stumbled on her way,
Her beacon blown out with a breath,
- “ Look back upon thy people now !
Behold the work thy hands have wrought,
The conquest of thy bleeding brow,
The harvest of thy sleepless thought.
- “ From sea to sea, from palm to pine,
The day of lord and slave is done ;
The wind will float no flag but thine ;
The long-divided house is one.
- “ More proudly will Potomac wind
Past thy pure temple to the sea ;
But ah ! the hearts of men will find
No marble white enough for thee.”

IX

THE FIRST MAN—AND THE SECOND!

"The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is the Lord from Heaven."—I COR. 15: 47.

THIS chapter contains one of the supreme insights into the nature of God, the Universe, and Man. Paul seemed to regard the cosmos as an infinite, million-tinted flower of Deity, inbreathing His life, exhaling His power, uttering His thought. Wherever he looks—and the eyes of his mind flash everywhither in this stupendous vision—Paul beholds a world alive with Godhead, a humanity brooded over by Love, a Redeemer moving through matter and souls and history in a tumultuous passion of redemption. What appreciation of the worlds is here! What a sense of variousness in the scheme of things! What an awareness of the countless orders of being, controlled by perfect orderliness, from the lowest creatures to the highest! It is all amazing and tremendous—an unexampled manifestation of sheer intellectual grandeur glowing with vision, faith, eloquence, and inspiring assurance. Nothing is beyond the love, wisdom, and power of God, while the immeasurable possibilities of human na-

ture are conditioned alone by the voluntariness of man's response to the greatness and goodness of God—here is one of the overtones in this outburst of apostolic melody. Listening to such music, we learn through Paul and his spiritual kinsmen out of all ages, that Christianity is the religion of heavenly superiorities, duly accredited by souls in whom is "the true sparkling of the Holy Ghost." One may tap this chapter at almost any verse and immediately tides of vitality begin to flow. I have chosen this particular text because, if possible, it seems to me even fuller and richer in suggestiveness than any other single passage in the chapter. Let us therefore phrase our study, "The First Man—and the Second!" as we consider somewhat their origin, their viewpoint, and their goal.

I

Consider the origin of the two men. While both are here upon the earth, each came from a different quarter. From whence came the first man? His soul came from God, his body came out of the earth—he "is of the earth, earthy." What a story is this of man's journey out of the immemorial past into the quivering present, up from unfathomable lowliness to the peaks of ineffable splendour! Think of the æons behind him, the vanished orders beneath him, the mysterious strains within him! Stone ages, iron ages, bronze ages; life in the sea, life on the land, life

in the air ; orderly changes, cataclysmic upheavals, revolutionary conflagrations—man has walked through the darkness, the dimness, and the light of all, burdened by his littleness, tormented by his vastness. Man is a many-roomed palace with subtle stairways leading down into the cryptic cellars of being. Wrought of the dust and brother to the worm, he is alive with divinity and the child of God.

Whatever of wonder and awe may cling to the careers of super-intelligences, surely this being “of the earth, earthy” has his own unique life-history to relate. A creature of atoms and stars, of fire-mist and minerals, of sun and dew, of cells and air, of flesh and blood, of brain and brawn, man is the end of the physical universe and the beginning of the spiritual. What ages have come and gone, chanting their threnody of woes and agonies, of lives and deaths, of romances and tragedies, to bring forth this child of a day, this citizen of forever ! Count the mineral ages by the million, multiply the vegetable eras by the myriad, add the animal epochs by the thousands of thousands, and we are staggered by contemplating the infinite preparation of God before a human could breathe and laugh and thrill to the sheer joy of being. Therefore, of the earth, earthy, man cannot deny his poor relations. Humble, they have made man physically possible, and they are doing so this very hour ; patient, they have toiled on in the

darkness for his welfare; in league with plant and mineral, the whole animal world is unconsciously groaning and travailing to realize the far-off ends represented in the human.

Man dare not despise his lowly brethren of the soil. Minerals and metals are his rude forefathers of the underworld. Let this haughty biped scorn them and he will freeze to death! Vegetables and micro-organisms are his cousins in blood and bone. Let him but undertake to pass them by on the other side, with a kind of levitical and priestly indifference, and he will forthwith perish of starvation! Thus, while man's head may be caught in a thicket of star-clusters, his feet are thrust deep into the ooze, muck, and mire of the earth. Do you doubt it? Then read a page like this on your own natural history—it will help to cure you of hereditary and ancestral pride: "There was a time when the highest form of life upon the planet was a jelly-like mass, floating about in the water. It was without power of locomotion, sightless, and senseless, capable only of absorbing such food particles as the primeval ocean drifted against it."

And yet, out of that chaos and protoplasm, has issued this human harmony and theophany of mind. But something cannot conceivably come out of nothing; nor can more ultimately issue from anything than was originally put into it. Consequently, that "jelly-like mass, floating about in the water," must have been aquiver with Deity,

sentient with Godhead. So, wet with the mystery of seas and hot with the fire of suns, his body a playground of the jungle and his mind sensitive to the urge of God, this first man of the earth, earthy, stands forth at last a physical and mental museum in which the relics and achievements of his million-cycled pilgrimage are fascinatingly assembled. If, as the seer sings, rise upon rise of phantoms bow behind him, surely peak upon peak of luring ideals tower above him. For the glory that flames in sun and star is as nothing compared with the Love and Mind costumed in all forms of matter and energy, toiling unrestingly on toward the full realization of the sonship of the sons of God.

To this august end, Paul beheld God and men thinking and loving and labouring together in the many-featured universe. What unutterable grandeur is there in the apostle's vision of the infinite variety displayed in the cosmos. Long before it was possible for Alfred Russel Wallace to write his chapter on "Infinite Variety, the Law of the Universe," this selfsame truth was clearly perceived and enthusiastically felt by Paul the Apostle. He says there is variety in flesh: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes." There is variety in bodies: "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial." There is variety in their glory: "But the glory of the celestial is one, and

the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." There is variety even in the resurrection of the dead: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

And what shall we now say of the Second Man's whence? Just this: *He is the Lord from Heaven*. The first man is the subject of geology, of zoology, of paleontology, of embryology, of biology—of every science, indeed, affording a clue to the planetary life of which man is the end and crown. Yet the origin of the Second Man is not of space, or matter, or energy. He does not take orders from them; He imposes His own thought, will, and laws upon them. To construe Him, we gladly borrow all the light furnished by scientific and philosophic categories. But after giving us all the aid they can, they simply lead us to the edge of infinity and vanish, leaving us gazing entrancedly upon unexplored abysses of wonder and uncharted oceans of mystery. Why, the lowliest stir of life is a miracle too great to be told. Let the physicist liken the living creature to a marvellous machine—with its power to transform matter and energy, with its physical phenomena, of surface tension, of diffusion, of elasticity, of

hydrostatics, of thermodynamics, of electricity, and all the rest.

Yet, as Geddes and Thompson show, the distance between the most complex machine and the simplest vital organism is so great that it cannot be spanned by any bridge save Mind itself. Thus firmly do science, reason, and revelation set our feet upon the highways leading straight to God-head. As mechanism is finally understood only through the vitalism of the mind behind it, so vitalism, whether in the electron, the constellation, the plant, the animal, the human, or the angel, is explained by the ever-living God.

Therefore, the Lord from Heaven gives us a threefoldness of outlook and insight, infinitely beautiful and infinitely satisfying. He first introduces us to Mind: "In the beginning was the Eternal Mind, and the Eternal Mind was with God, and the Eternal Mind was God." Back of universal genesis, behind all beginnings, is the Eternal Thinker. Creation is the first letter in the alphabet of the Originating Mind. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Saint John gives us a Second Genesis, which is really anterior to the first, just as the Second Man is archetypally before the first. Second: The Eternal Mind, originally upholstered in the Creation, is the very same that speaks to us in the Incarnation. "And the Eternal Mind was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld His splendour,

the splendour as of the Only Born of the Father, full of beauty and truth." That is, in the fullness of time the Eternal Mind, out of which the universe unfolded, like a million-tinted rose, is here in the flesh, within the blood, and trembling on the bone. The Being who wears the ever-flowing cosmos as a garment has come to wear the hitherto unworn habiliments of Perfect Goodness before the suspicious gaze of earthly-eyed men.

And how will this man of the earth, earthy, receive the Man from the Skies? Just as the jungle would receive an angel dropping into its howling, growling, clawing, gnawing, leaping, creeping, boiling, coiling blackness! Yet, such is the paradox of Infinite Goodness, that God and holy men seem to reserve unto themselves the right to be maltreated, cast out, blasphemed, crucified, only to return in mightier invasions of love and judgment. For God compels man to confess His love, even though the confession be recited in creeds of woe and litanies of doom. For the worlds are so organized that "the wronger is wronged until he renders right" and the sin in man's soul is hunted until God finds none. Third: The Eternal Mind in the Creation and the Eternal Mind in the Incarnation flashes out in the Christocentric Interpretation: "No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Born, the one Only Son, Who is in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Oh, what a Bosom is here un-

bosomed! The emotion of Motherhood, the emotion of Fatherhood, the emotion of Birth, the emotion of Sonship—all struggle for utterance in this rune of heavenly declaration.

“But,” you reply, “the Annunciation and the Virgin Birth are so mysterious that they greatly trouble me.” Well, my friend, you are not the only one who has been troubled in these golden wonderlands. There was a maiden in the hills of Galilee who was also “greatly troubled” by the salutation divine. “An angel?” you ask. “But how could there possibly be such a creature?” Would you really like to know? Just be perfectly quiet, don’t get excited, and I will tell you: *An angelic being is possible because God is!* “Oh,” but you insist, “that leaves so much unexplained, or, rather, it is no explanation at all.” So you want the metaphysics of it all, do you? Good! And just as I thought! Very well; but if we are going to embark upon the ocean of metaphysics, let me ask you one simple question before we set sail: *How does anything come to be?* A stick, for example, or a rock, or a star? Now don’t begin to talk about laws, for laws are just lies behind which embarrassed philosophers and godless theologians hide. A law is nothing but the well-known habit of some phase of life or energy or force. There never was a law without a law-giver; there never will be; there never can be. So don’t deceive yourself into thinking you have ex-

plained anything whatever by taking the great modern joke upon your lips: "Laws to the right of us! Laws to the left of us! Laws behind us! Laws before us!" Verily, a right fool's word is that word law, if it be not a token, a sign, of the Eternal Lawgiver! In the last analysis, the existence of an angel is no more mysterious than the existence of an atom, no more wonderful than the blooming of a rose or the budding of a tree. While there is unquestionable likeness in the architecture of plants and animals, each and all of them are constructed of cells through the endless modification of cells. The tree and the angel, ultimately, are just variations of the unexhausted melody of the Life of God. "I am of the oldest religion," said Emerson. "Leaving aside the question which was prior, egg or bird, I believe the mind is the creator of the world, and is ever creating; that at last Matter is dead Mind; that mind makes the senses it sees with; that the genius of man is the continuation of the Power that made him and is not done making him."

That is fine as an exposition of religious beginnings; it is pathetically inadequate as a statement of progressive and unfolding revelation; and thoroughly unworthy of the native insight of our Concord seer. Like others of his type, Emerson woodenly hung his mind upon the peg of a mental prejudice and refused to take it down so long as that prejudice was involved. The result was that

he was a Christian only in spots, or in so far as his prejudgments were not inconvenienced or shattered. A quite different-grained mind was that of Huxley. Yet the Englishman and the American are agreed in this: They have a positive genius for mis-seeing and misunderstanding the Person of Christ and the Christian Religion. "Compare," says Huxley, "the brightly coloured lichen and the painter to whom it is instinct with beauty, or the botanist whom it feeds with knowledge. And yet they are all the same." Yes, all the same—with this infinite difference: The lichen is mindless matter, while the painter and the botanist are, essentially, matterless mind; that is, the lichen is unconscious, the man is self-conscious.

Yet it is to Huxley that we are indebted for most valuable information in matters relating to the Virgin Birth of Christ. Peyton quotes him as writing to the Dean of Wells: "Virgin procreation and resuscitation from apparent death are ordinary phenomena for the naturalist." Thus, as Peyton affirms, parthenism, or virgin birth, is no difficulty for the naturalist; it is only a difficulty for literary men and metaphysicians. And why? Partly because they do not understand the methods of nature, but chiefly because of unbelief, which has the fatal power of causing its victim to put the lesser reason for the greater, to close with explanations more enigmatical and far harder for the intellect to grasp than the profoundest problem it-

self. On the whole, there is no more idiotic and ridiculous chapter in the history of human thought than the attitude of learned fools toward realities as clear as noonday to the eyes of faith. If the majority of the scientists and philosophers had spent a thousandth part as much time in prayer and praise as they have in intellectual hair-splitting, frequently resulting in pompous, ill-founded, dogmatic assertions, they would have been better off themselves, while their personal faith and character would have proven of salutary worth to mankind in general. The fact is, that the person who yields himself wholly into the custody of materialism is running true to form when he denies the spiritual. He is every whit as foolish to the saint as the saint is to him; and while he laughs at the saint, the saint weeps over him. Yet his soul-measure was perfectly taken by an expert spiritual tailor of the long ago: "Now the unspiritual man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually examined."

If the first man is of the earth, earthy, the Second Man is the Lord from Heaven. He came verily through the door of birth into our noises; but He moved in creative splendour through the Womb of Eternity before He lay concealed within the womb of that Galilean maiden. One radiantly celestial day ill-spoken Nazareth became a suburb

of the New Jerusalem. Swift-winged Gabriel came from the City of White and said unto Mary: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee." Then did the greatly troubled maiden, shaken like an Easter lily by the pollen-bearing, priestly wind, cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. With ambassadorial grace and ingratiating speech, the pleader drew gently, hushedly nearer. "Fear not, Mary," said he, "for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Do you think the angel's speech is fair? Well, then, hear Mary the Maid, eloquent with innocence and white with wonder: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" All the snow-white innocence of all the little children of all the ages speak through that question! Yet, as in the dim beginning of things, order was harmoniously wooed out of chaos, so the apocalyptic veil is angelically lifted from the face of the new and higher creation: "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the Holy Thing

which is begotten of thee shall be called the Son of God." "But Nature's laws are violated," you exclaim. "Nature is cheated out of her rights." Oh, foolish man and slow of heart to believe, tell that to God—yea, tell that to the living, creative God, Who throbs in every germ, Who quivers in every atom, Who foreknows universes and speaks them into existence, Who—

"Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow."

If Nature is pregnant with thought, the Divine inthinking having veined every flower and fired every star; if the million-toned summer is alive with creatures begotten of parthenism, or sexless generation; if the universe itself, with its systems and laws and variegated creatures, is best understood by the concept of birth; if all the life on our planet, as Lord Kelvin held, has come from a germ imported from distant spheres, or otherwise—why is it a thing incredible that God, in making His supreme adventure in the flesh, should Himself experience on a Divine scale that which is mysteriously familiar on the human scale? Next to the creation of the universe in point of time, and infinitely greater than that creation from the viewpoint of moral intelligence, is the Birth of God in Bethlehem—the historic beginning of the rescue of the first man of the earth, earthy, by the Second Man, Who is the Lord from Heaven.

Herein, indeed, does our modern singer reveal a larger grasp of the Incarnation than did the immortal blind bard of old:

“Milton, you did them wrong the hour you sang
 The Lord's Nativity: the fair young gods,
 Scorched by your scorn and stricken by your
 rods,
 Were loved of Him Who took the mortal pang.
 He knew their cliffs that shone, their wells that
 sprang,
 And all the wonder of their purple clime;
 And as His feet descended into Time,
 Their voices on the hills and sea-reefs rang.

“So the young gods of Hellas knew the hour
 When life's bough was to break in sudden flower;
 And in the hush they knelt without a word
 Beside the Stall; for in the Little One
 They saw Apollo come again, and heard
 His name cried in the porches of the sun.”

II

The meeting of the two men here upon the earth—that, surely, is an event of stupendous import. One comes up from the depths, physically speaking, “stuccoed all over with quadrupeds,” with mire and slime and blood dripping from his fleshly garments; One comes down from the high and holy hills of God, to wind His redemptive arms about the other and carry him up the great heights into His Heavens beyond. Truly, this

Celestial Invader capturing His terrestrial backward brother and rebel is the mightiest truth yet revealed in the transcendent disclosures of God. But having met here, is it not revealing to hear the two men talk, to get their viewpoints concerning God, Man, Nature, Sin, and Destiny? For the man of the earth, earthy, once he has acquired the power of speech and invented language, is a tremendous talker—a vast, unceasing, history-old talker. He may not have much to say; nevertheless, he will revel in the luxury of making and using words, though the heavens fall and the seas run dry. And if anything proves that a new order of mind is here in the Person of Christ—a Mind in whose ample spaces all of earth's wise men may walk and have abundant room—it is the viewpoint, the mental attitude, of these two men. Take, for example, the idea of God.

Usually, how do men approach this thought? Is it not by argument—a mental-thus-and-so process? I am not criticizing the method; I am simply pointing out that it was not by intellectual carpentry that our Lord built up His thought of God. He never argued the being of God, any more than a builder argues whether there is space to contain his building. The architect does not find it necessary to debate the possibility and nature of space; he knows, perhaps, that the scientists, philosophers, and theologians will enjoy a mental feast over that aspect of the subject. The architect,

being perfectly sure of space, assumes space, builds into space, and is never denied by space. Space, no matter what it may be academically, is always there, ready to receive the builder's walls. So Jesus assumed God; He was absolutely sure of Him; He assessed sun, rain, lilies, birds, sheep, children, men, women, and angels to explicate His certainty of God. Is not this a spiritual phenomenon of the first magnitude? Multitudes of able men in every age—infidels, atheists, agnostics, skeptics of high and low degree—have produced libraries in the effort to discredit Jesus' idea of God. But the libraries and their authors are in time moth-eaten or dust-covered, or both; the Fatherhood of God as experienced and taught by Christ is alive with April greenness and as soul-soothing as the quiet depths of a vast cathedral—

“Where all the exiles of the heart return to rest.”

What is the basis of governments? The viewpoint of the two men concerning this important subject may well be studied. While the politicians are roaring through the land, and the partisans are buzzing like bees in full swarm, and the lean grafters are clamouring for the standing room uncertainly occupied by the fat ones—is it not high time that men and nations were seriously considering the source and tenure of all governments? Well, the man of the earth, earthy—this ancient-modern, this modern-ancient, this clever, sensual

man from Berlin, from Paris, from Petrograd, from London, from New York, from Chicago—does he not speak out loud and bold in Pontius Pilate, that paragon of politicians, from the first century to the twentieth? Like many a politician, Pilate did everything he could to save Jesus but—the right thing! Trimming and browbeating, arguing and cajoling, nations and individuals, like Pilate, at last reach the parting of the ways: one is the way of right, one is the way of wrong; one leads to death, one leads to life. Tossed upon the seas of political expediency when the tides of justice were running deep and swift, Pilate asked Jesus: “Whence art Thou?” For a brief moment there was the deafening thunder of silence. “But Jesus gave him no answer.” Then Pilate broke the silence with characteristic Roman rage. “Speakest Thou not unto me?” he shouted. “Knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify Thee?” Oh, the midnight frown upon the Governor’s brow, and oh, the woven calm upon the Saviour’s face! Wisely forget that outbreak of tyranny and calmly remember these words of truth and doom: “Jesus answered him, Thou wouldst have no power against Me, *except it were given thee from above.*”

Hear, oh America, oh England, oh France, oh Germany, oh Russia—all your power is dependent upon this: *It is given thee from above!* Long-suffering and most patient is the Silent Watcher

and Giver of power. But woe—woe—woe to peoples and men who mock and defy the Enthroned Benevolence in the deeps of the universe! For we people living in the first quarter of the twentieth century have at least had the opportunity of learning and knowing this fact: Retribution has a past tense as well as a future tense, fulfillment as well as prophecy. We are in no doubt whatever—we *know* that the nations which have forgotten God have *already* been turned into hell. History itself is one long flame-scorched commentary, a burning hell unto the nations trampling right under foot; we have witnessed in our day the most terrible illustration of the truth that, as Chesterton puts it, there is hell in the universe because there is hell in the heart; and we do know now, beyond peradventure or speculation, that whatsoever nations sow nations must also reap. Carlyle said that the French Revolution was truth clad in hell-fire; the World War is hell-fire vindicating truth—the relentless flame of justice cauterizing the individual, social, national, and international cancers produced by falsehood, avarice, lust, and godlessness. Dead these twenty centuries are Pilate and his Prisoner; yea, wickedly dead is Pilate, but his Prisoner has deadened even Death itself, because He is alive forevermore!

The two men discussed, also, the question of property—and especially its back-lying causes of contention. Once, while the Master was teaching,

He was interrupted by one out of the multitude. "Teacher," cried this man, "bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." But the Master refused to be drawn into a family dispute over property. Did the tone of the questioner's voice, the unmistakable atmosphere outbreathed by his personality, determine the Lord's reply? "Man," he said, "who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" Christ never stops with mere symptoms; He goes to the roots of disease. "And He said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Life—rich, soul-deep, æonian, deathless life—that is the supreme matter with our Lord. And what is one of the deadliest enemies of eternal life lived in the flesh? Covetousness—greed—selfishness—which crawls like a snake into its own dingy self-possession and hides, coiled up in stingy, spiritual darkness, subtly concealed from the liberal in-shining of health-giving light. Nor is covetousness confined to class-consciousness; it is part of the deadly virus of sin; it is so inclusively democratic that it is content to dwell in the heart of the bolshevist or the capitalist, peasant or emperor, male or female, preacher or stock-broker. Ah, this is why we adore the Lord from Heaven—He tells the man of the earth, earthy, the truth about Himself!

In the light of Christ, does not all this world-

wide contention over property have greed and covetousness for its background and animating cause? Are you foolish enough to think that justice, truth, and fair dealing are the predominant issues in all this capitalistic and bolshevistic upheaval? Let me be concrete: Is the man who has piled up millions, either by honourable or dishonourable methods, interested, primarily, in the victory of social, national, and international righteousness? You know he is not; he knows he is not; and God knows he is not. As a class, he is fundamentally devoted to the pursuit of wealth, and to what wealth can buy—whether a palace, a harem, or a seat in Congress. On the other hand, is the Marxian socialist, the Trotsky plunderer, the labour profiteer, the bomb-throwing I. W. W.ist—is he losing any sleep over mercy, and justice, and loving-kindness? Just about as much as your average rich man is losing sleep over the realities of faith, hope, and love! Both are of the earth, earthy, interested but slightly, if at all, in the everlasting truth of the Lord from Heaven.

Now, if this is true—and I believe it is the unvarnished truth, however imperfectly stated—what fools are we preachers and teachers and patriots and churches to be everlastingly harping on the theme that a godless economic Eden, sooner or later, somehow, somewhere, will be realized, and all will be well! Let us, in Christ's Name, wage unceasing warfare against social injustice, political

corruption, poverty, disease, and ignorance; but let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that the correction of any or all of these evils can cure the wrongness in human nature. Men bear in their souls a death-wound which can be healed only by God in Christ utterly possessing them. Build your cities with streets of gold, palaces of ivory, and market-places of marble; liberally educate and lavishly feed, clothe, and house every man, woman, and child in the wide, wide world; telephone from the lightning express limited and make your social calls in an airplane; cross the oceans from below or above; do all that imagination can conjure, and more. Yet, until our sin-bitten souls are cured by the conscious reception and application of the energies of redeeming grace through Christ the Lord, our cities of glass may be only glittering piles of gloom, even while our sin-seared minds are frantically contriving undreamed highways of death, because the most brilliant economic solution of the problems of life leaves the real problem of life itself unsolved. "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his life; or what shall he give in exchange for his life?"

III

Consider the goal of the two men. 'As the universe and humanity have origin and movement, they likewise have consummation and goal.

“Then cometh the end,” says Paul, “when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted Who did subject all things unto Him. And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all.” Here, indeed, is a vision of the finished creation, involving, as Dr. George A. Gordon has interpreted it with mastery and insight, the life of God before all worlds, the life of God in all worlds, and the life of God after all worlds have returned unto Himself. Thus, as the beginning of the two men is far back, as the place and purpose of their meeting is aglow with luminous mystery, so their goal is far-flung, surpassing the powers of thought and imagination. The world, mankind, supernal beings—all have a history—history partially written, history now in the making, history that will some time be completed.

Consider, in the light of this truth, the modifications still to be wrought in the realm of matter. Our earth is like a many-coloured ship sailing the immeasurable oceans of space. It speeds onward

twenty miles a second, 1,200 miles a minute, 72,000 miles an hour, 1,728,000 miles a day. But earth is not simply a terrific ship for speed; it is like a ship, also, whose bunkers are packed with mysterious elements and gigantic forces. As the coarser minerals and metals disappear, such as coal, iron, and copper, the higher and more wonderful refinements of matter are constantly coming into evidence. Witness radium, helium, and all that group of baffling substances and elements, quivering with colossal energies, of which the present knows so little, of which the future will know so much. Yet have we not already had a hint, a forecast of these and their tremendous possibilities in the risen body of the Lord Christ? Sometimes He was visible, sometimes He was not; sometimes He was obedient to the law of gravity, at other times He used that law for the achievement of His own ends in ways past our finding out; He lent His body to all of death's destructive power, then He turned upon death, outwitted and outbattled him, triumphantly destroying the destroyer; He passed through material walls as X-rays pass through skin, blood, and bones; at last, unembarrassed by space and gravity, He vanished into the Unseen as quietly as our world turns one side of its face away from the sun every nightfall.

Perhaps the physicist and psychologist of a thousand years hence will be able to explain these

mysteries to our descendants. There are those who think that they will be explicable in a much briefer period—for example, Francis Thompson: “Scientists, those eyeless worms who loosen the soil for the crops of God, have declared that they are proving miracles false, because they are contrary to the laws of Nature. I can see that in fifty years’ time they will have proved miracles true, because they are based on the laws of Nature.”

But the tapping and use of our inner powers, the fuller understanding of the subconscious and superconscious self, will represent an achievement superior to any manipulation which may be had over cosmic energies. “I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” said the psalmist; yet it is only when a Bergson splits open and explores and exhibits our hidden, submerged selves that we begin to have some adequate conception of the measure of our own wonderfulness and fearfulness. “In reality,” he says, “the past is preserved by itself, automatically. In its entirety, probably, it follows us at every instant; all that we have felt, thought, and willed from our earliest infancy is there, leaning over the present which is about to join it, pressing against the portals of consciousness that would fain leave it outside.” I say perhaps the wise men of the future will explain with entire satisfaction many of the things insoluble to us. But inasmuch as I haven’t time to wait for these far-off interpreters, and inasmuch as we all have

the opportunity of practicing the immortal life now, I am glad to be able to confidently trust the Easter Christ, Who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel! For in Him is abundant fulfillment of the Cosmic, the Human, and the Divine, fragrantly voiced in David Morton's "Symbol":

" My faith is all a doubtful thing,
 Wove on a doubtful loom,—
Until there comes, each showery spring,
 A cherry tree in bloom.

" And Christ Who died upon a tree
 That death had stricken bare,
Comes beautifully back to me,
 In blossoms, everywhere."

The subject challenges us to consider, also, man's undreamed possibilities in the realm of mind. Most glibly and vaingloriously have we fallen into the habit of speaking of the "modern mind." Many of the users of this overworked phrase seem to be blissfully unaware of the fact that, if there had not been an ancient and mediæval mind, there could not possibly be such a thing as the modern mind! But what if all men should some time have the mental capacity of Platos and Shakespeares? Impossible? It is no more impossible than that yonder warbler on wings should have evolved, in the course of a million ages, from

the snake; no more impossible than that Shakespeare himself, earth's greatest poet, should have been born of illiterate parents. The time-element is highly important to us, creatures of a day, as indeed it is to God; but with this vast difference: God has plenty of time, and He knows how to use it. A thousand years are as one day to Him, and one day as a thousand years—which is a picturesque way of saying that we and God do not make calendars on the same scale. Given abundance of time, a soul unencumbered by sin and flesh, a personality quiveringly alive to its resources and capacities, and only the untrodden highways of the illimitable future, embosomed in the ever-green and ever-ripening gardens of God, can disclose the enchanted dominion of a thoroughly humanized and a completely Christianized mind. What huge, sunken mental galleons most of us are, submerged in seas of mire and dirt and sin, ten thousand fathoms below the stars of truth and skies of beauty! And oh! what creatures of wonder and mystery! By changing a word or two, the poetess, like the brilliant philosopher quoted above, presses home the truth that we are indeed "fearfully and wonderfully made":

"Atoms as old as stars, mutation on mutation,
 Millions and millions of cells dividing, yet still
 the same;
 From air and changing earth, from ancient
 Eastern rivers,
 From turquoise tropic seas, unto myself I came.

“ My spirit, like my flesh, sprang from a thousand
sources,
From cave-man, hunter, and shepherd, from
Karnak, Cyprus, Rome ;
The living thoughts in me spring from dead men
and women
Forgotten time out of mind and many as bubbles
of foam.

“ Here for a moment's space into the light out of
darkness,
The many in one are mingled, finding words
with my breath ;
Like a great voice in me I hear them shout :
‘ Forever
Seek the Christ—He only fights for man against
death.’ ”

Pursuing the thought a step further, we may say that all refinements of matter and enlargements of mind are crowned and perfected in the spiritual. On the bodily side, this first man of the earth, earthy, has journeyed with his planet out of the fire-mist, up through mineral and vegetable and animal kingdoms to primitive man ; thence on through the dawning human to the civilized state, until, within these later ages, he has come within hailing distance of Christianized man. But he is still within hailing distance only ! As yet man is Christianized barely in spots ; the animal streak and the pagan tinge are deep-grained. Is it not well for us to remind ourselves now and then that there has been but One full-toned Christian in all these aching, crimson millenniums ? Majestic out-

lines we have had, magnificent hints—John and Paul and their Christian brethren out of all climes and times! Yet are they only broken lights of the Central Sun. If the time is long, the work is commensurately great; for God has set Himself the task of the complete humanization of the earth through the process of thoroughly Christianizing it.

And this requires time and toil and patience and love and tears. Behold the uncomputed silences through which God has wrought upon matter, moulding and kneading the starry stuff unto His own high design! But what is working with and through obstinate, lifeless matter compared with working through and with living, recalcitrant, willful spirits? Will not the Being Who toils geologic ages upon a stone or star, unendowed with consciousness, likewise toil upon a soul made in His own image—a spiritual entity that abides after systems have waxed and waned? For both Revelation and Christian Consciousness affirm the purpose and goal, which is the completion of personality through God's indwelling and spiritualization. Has not the purpose found sublime utterance in the words of the prophet: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite"?

Under the leadership of the Second Man, great ages lie before humanity. Our world is still in its early morning; its grasses are wet with dew-pearled freshness. Mars is old and gray-headed; Venus is the prey of solar wrinkles; long ago the Moon went dead, though she still wears a lovely false face to keep up appearances, thanks to the obliging and generous Sun. But Earth is young and gay and rosy—undefeated by cruel wars, undiscouraged by innumerable failures, unbroken by immemorial wrongs—calling to the man of the earth, earthy:

“Look up, O mortals, and the portent heed;
 In every deed,
 Washed with new fire to their irradiant birth,
 Reintegrated are the heavens and earth!
 From sky to sod,
 The world's unfolded blossom smells of God.”

The Lord from Heaven is here! Having patiently and agonizingly won through so far over stubborn matter-stuff, think you the Almighty and Ever-living Love will utterly give over His lost, sinful, human children to Death and Hades? A thousand times no! Know you not that man is still a spiritual infant? With all that he has done toward clearing and sanitizing and civilizing his planet; with his arts, his sciences, his industries, his cathedrals, his factories, his cities, his seats of learning—look you and consider if man is not still in the spiritually infantile stage! I know start-

lingly brilliant men who are still wondering if God is real, if God knows His own mind. Moreover, in spinning such cogitations, they never crack a smile! Nay, verily, they are resolvers of doubt, national and international reformers, pioneers, as they gravely assert, in the uncleared wilderness of thought! Others there are clever enough to conceive and organize and manage great enterprises, who daily and hourly beat about in a stifling, unspiritual atmosphere, incessantly rubbing and blinking their dust-filled eyes and asking if Anybody runs this Infinite Enterprise named the Universe? Does not this prove, beyond peradventure, that all such, however physically and intellectually able, are still whining, spiritual infants, who have not yet cut their celestial teeth!

Paul deals most tenderly and motheringly with these belated and backward spiritual children. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal," he says, "as unto babes." How could this mighty master in things spiritual interpret and clarify for those wrangling, flesh-clogged Corinthians his own vision of the Eternal? He simply could not; they made it impossible; there were lacking equally perceiving and responsive minds. Babes are not adapted to subjects of high and holy discourse; babes are for brooding mothers and nutritious milk. The history of astronomy furnishes another illustration. On the day that Galileo, "the starry

amorist," was "starward gone," little Isaac Newton was born. Suppose the spirit of the great Italian had come to that babe and undertaken to impart all that he had thought and discovered concerning yonder golden gardens of stars! You will suppose nothing of the sort; you know that such a supposition would be absurd. Yet the day did come when that babe, unfolded into manhood's myriad-ranging estate, took this enormous cosmos in his mental fingers like an orange and squeezed wonders out of it far exceeding anything that Galileo had known. It is even so with the man of the earth, earthy; but after he has been thoroughly tutored by the Lord from Heaven, he will see that things apparently impossible are the perfectly normal things, while his most daring dreams will have become his soul-deep and heaven-high realities.

"Beloved"—said far-seeing and white-hearted John, after pilgriming so far into the spiritual sunset that he seemed already on the budding verge of the everlasting morning—"Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." Having attained unto that Likeness and that Vision, the soul is splendidly equipped for its immortal career in the million-systemed universe. No ventures can daunt it; no tasks can tire it; no thoughts can overwhelm it;

no deaths can doom it. He is at last completely ready—this man of the earth, earthy, who—

“ . . . Comes a pilgrim of the universe
 Out of the mystery that was before
 The world, out of the wonder of old stars.
 Far roads have felt his feet, forgotten wells
 Have glassed his beauty bending down to drink.
 At altar-fires anterior to Earth
 His soul was lighted, and it will burn on
 After the suns have wasted on the void.
 His feet have felt the pressure of old worlds,
 And are to tread on others yet unnamed—
 Worlds sleeping yet in some new dream of
 God.”

But no matter what worlds may yet burst from the sensorium of Godhead, he shall voyage on unafraid. Companioned by the Lord from Heaven, having laid the earth away the moment he exchanged his natural body for his spiritual body, he shall walk forever tearless, painless, and deathless with those who “ sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord
 God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy
 ways, Thou King of the ages. Who shall not
 fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou
 only art holy; for all the nations shall come and
 worship before Thee; for Thy righteous acts
 have been made manifest.”

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